

ROYAL COMMISSION

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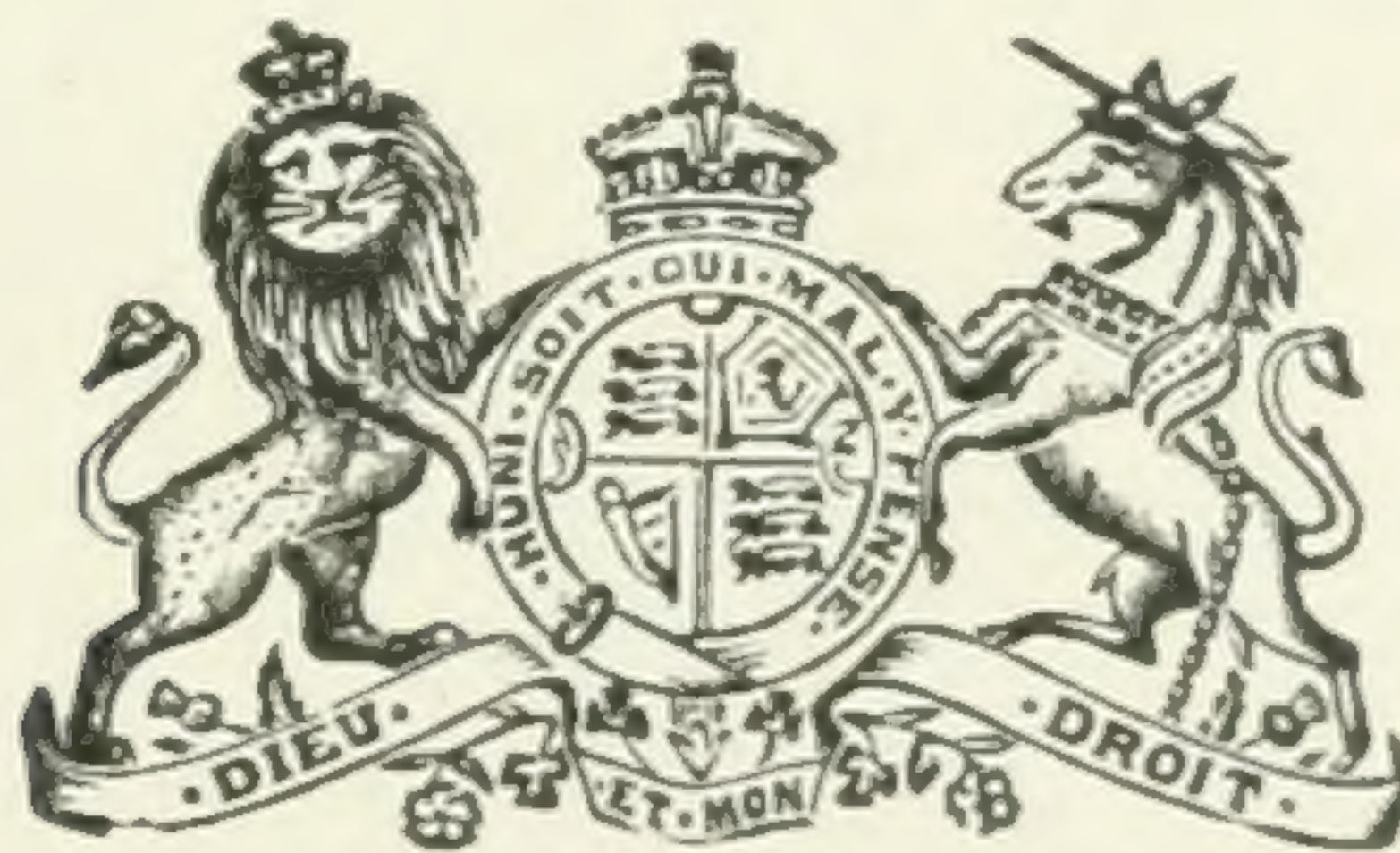
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS FIRE

AT

OTTAWA, FEBRUARY 3, 1916

REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS AND EVIDENCE

PRINTED BY ORDER OF PARLIAMENT.



OTTAWA

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1916.

[No. 72a—1916]

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REPORT

*To Field Marshal His Royal Highness Prince Arthur William Patrick Albert,
Duke of Connaught and of Strathearn, K.G., K.T., K.P., etc., etc., etc., Governor
General and Commander in Chief of the Dominion of Canada.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS:

Your Royal Highness was pleased by Royal Commission, dated 7th February, A.D. 1916, to appoint us commissioners to conduct an inquiry into and concerning the origin of the fire which destroyed the Parliament Buildings, at Ottawa, and to make full investigation into all matters connected therewith, and we were given all powers under the provisions of Part One of the Inquiries Act, being chapter 104 of the Revised Statutes of Canada, and the Amending Act, being chapter 28 of 2 George V (1912).

Immediately upon receiving our appointment we took steps to ascertain the names, in as far as possible, of any and all persons from whom we would be likely to obtain any evidence pertinent to the inquiry, and caused subpoenas to be issued and served for their attendance at the different sittings of the commission.

Our first meeting was held at the City Hall, city of Ottawa, on Thursday, the 10th day of February last, and a number of witnesses were examined, and at this meeting we publicly invited any person or persons who had any knowledge in regard to the origin of the fire, and which they considered the commission should be apprised of, to either attend before the commission, when their evidence would be heard, or to communicate with the commission.

We subsequently held a number of public meetings in the city of Ottawa, at which many witnesses were examined, and we received numerous communications from persons actuated by a desire to assist us in our investigation, all of which were considered carefully.

Your commissioners deemed it advisable to have the assistance of counsel, and retained W. R. White, Esq., K.C., of Pembroke, who acted throughout the investigation in the examination of witnesses, and generally in assisting your commission in their inquiry.

Your commissioners find that the fire which destroyed the Parliament Buildings in the city of Ottawa, on the night of 3rd February, 1916, started at about 8.55 p.m. (alarm registered at city fire station at 8.57 p.m.).

The fire had its origin in the room shown on the plan accompanying this report, as reading-room. This room was used as a newspaper room, and contained six double reading tables or desks with shelving on which newspaper files were placed. There were also screens or partitions, as shown on plan, on each side of the room on which newspaper files were hung. Around this room there was also a gallery with a large number of shelves on which there were piled papers, books, etc. All fittings, except two of above-mentioned reading tables (these two were of hardwood), were of white pine, oiled and varnished, and were highly inflammable.

The fire started in a file of papers on a shelf on one of the reading tables near the House of Commons side. The first person to see the fire was Francis Glass, Esq., M.P., who stated that the fire originated while he was in the reading-room; that he

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had been in the reading-room a short time when he felt a wave of heat passing up alongside of him as from a hot-air register, and he turned around and almost immediately smelled the burning of paper; stooped down and saw the smoke coming out. He immediately called the caretaker, who did not answer, and then he called to the officer, who looked at it and rushed out evidently for a fire extinguisher. The officer got an extinguisher off the wall of the reading-room, and started to operate it, but in an instant the fire gained headway, and developed into a large flame. The constable who got the fire extinguisher was Constable Moore.

This fire extinguisher was got from the east side of the reading-room, and according to the evidence of Constable Moore, was in good working order, but the fire had got such headway that he was unable to put it out with the extinguisher, and was driven back by the force of the fire. Just at the moment he was using the fire extinguisher, he called to some one to turn on the water, which was done immediately, and the water was directed on the fire from the Senate side, but neither the fire extinguisher or the stream of water which was directed on the fire had the effect of staying its progress, and it spread rapidly to the corridors of the House of Commons.

According to the evidence of Chief Graham, Chief of the Fire Department of the city of Ottawa, an alarm was sounded from the automatic system at 8.57, and within two minutes from the receipt of the alarm, No. 8 motor engine was on the Hill. The fire had by that time broken through the roof (the second alarm was sent in at 9.05), and in a very short time twenty streams of water were playing upon the fire. All the hydrants were in perfect order, with the exception of one, which was slightly frozen, but was thawed out very quickly. The water pressure, according to Chief Graham, was first class. Notwithstanding the efforts of the fire brigade, the fire extended practically throughout the whole building, and the fire was not got under control until two o'clock of the morning of 4th February.

The hook-and-ladder companies did splendid work in rescuing people from the building, but unfortunately, although every effort was made by the fire brigade, they were unable to rescue Mrs. Bray and Mrs. Morin. They were not got from the building until twenty-five or thirty minutes after the fire started, and both ladies expired through suffocation and shock. A number of men were rescued from the western side of the building by means of ladders. One tower that fell evidently killed Dominion Police Constable Desjardins, Alphonse Desjardins, an employee of the Public Works Department, and Walter Fanning, an employee of the Post Office Department. These men were directing a stream from one of the stand-pipes in the building, and were buried under tons of débris when the tower fell. J. B. Laplante, Assistant Law Clerk of the House of Commons, was evidently overcome in one of the rooms, and his remains were found in a badly burned condition the following day. Mr. B. B. Law, member of Parliament, was also caught in the building, but his remains have not been recovered.

The fire spread with tremendous rapidity. Once breaking from the reading-room the heat and flame spread around the corridors of the House of Commons chamber and into the roof of the Commons and Senate chambers, which were of white pine, and the construction of which was, as expressed by the Chief of Police, a veritable forest of timber. There were no fire checks or iron doors in the building with the exception of one to the Library which evidently had the effect of saving the Library.

WERE PROPER PRECAUTIONS TAKEN TO GUARD AGAINST FIRE?

Some suggestions have been made that there should have been fire checks or fire doors between the reading-room and the corridors, which would have had the effect of confining the fire to the reading-room until such time as it could be conquered. It has also been suggested that if there had been a sprinkling system installed in the

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reading-room that it might have suppressed the fire. Mr. Ewart, Consulting Architect, formerly Chief Architect for the Department of Public Works, in his evidence states that the advisability of putting in a modern up-to-date sprinkling system had never been considered, and he was doubtful as to its being feasible, although he was of opinion that it might have been put in the reading-room. As to the metal doors, his opinion was that the Library was saved by the metal door, but he did not consider that metal doors between the reading-room and the corridors would have prevented the fire, as the fire would have got over the top of the doors, owing to the construction of the building. The building was not in any sense a fire-proof building. Mr. Ewart has been connected with the building since 1871, and stated that in the days when these buildings were erected fire-proof buildings were not considered.

We have also learned from competent architects that it is not usual to put in a sprinkling system in a building such as the House of Commons. We are of opinion that all proper precautions were taken to guard against the spread of fire. The House of Commons building within the last two or three years was equipped with the May-Oatway automatic fire alarm system, which is connected directly with the city fire alarm system, and evidently was in perfect order on the night of the fire. According to the evidence, there were in the House of Commons building: 74 extinguishers, 62 being chemical; and 12 fire reels, 3,150 feet of hose in 100-foot lengths, and a reel containing one length of 400 feet for emergency. There were ample hydrants quite sufficient to cover the fire area. There were also fire axes and other fire-fighting appliances. The staffs were instructed in the use of the fire extinguisher from time to time. The evidence shows, and we find that the fire extinguishers were in good order at the time of the fire.

WAS THE FIRE OF INCENDIARY ORIGIN?

The statement of John R. Rathom, Editor and General Manager of the *Providence Journal*—a journal published in Providence, R.I., United States—that three weeks before the fire he had received information from employees of the German Embassy that within three weeks from that time the Ottawa Parliament Buildings would be destroyed by fire, coming at a time when there was a strong tendency on the part of the Canadian public to believe that the fire was maliciously set by the enemy, your commissioners felt that this theory, repugnant though it be to every instinct of humane men, could not be brushed aside as unbelievable, especially in view of the fact that John R. Rathom, almost at the same time, had given information in regard to the plot for the destruction of the Welland canal, and we consequently bent our energies in an effort to see whether a German mind had inspired this fire or not. We endeavoured for some time to get a statement from or to have John R. Rathom come to Ottawa for examination. We did not succeed in getting Mr. Rathom to come to Ottawa, but we received on the 13th of this month a statement from him, in which he says that three weeks before the fire he notified United States District Attorney H. Snowden Marshall, of the New York District, that in three weeks from that time the Ottawa Parliament Buildings would be destroyed by fire, and that Mr. Marshall has publicly acknowledged that this notification was given to him. While Mr. Rathom says the information came directly from the German Embassy itself, he is not in a position at the present time to make public the name of his informant.

We have taken the evidence of Colonel A. P. Sherwood, and made inquiries to see whether this information which was apparently given to H. Snowden Marshall ever reached Ottawa. We find that it did not.

We considered it advisable to ascertain whether proper precautions had been taken to prevent the destruction of the Parliament Buildings by fire or otherwise, and we find from the evidence of Col. A. P. Sherwood that immediately after the outbreak of war he had a conference with the Prime Minister (see page 141 of evidence).

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and a meeting was arranged between the two Speakers (House of Commons and Senate) and Colonel Sherwood, and as a result of this interview the guards about the buildings were strengthened, and a number of plain-clothes men were added to the force. Then again, on February 3, 1915, at the time of the blowing up of the bridge at Vanceboro, a special circular was sent out by Colonel Sherwood to every police department in Canada asking that extra vigilance be used (see circular, page 143 of evidence). Again, on or about the 12th July, 1915, in view of the alarming reports received, the Governor in Council decided on certain precautions in regard to public buildings. These precautions are fully set out in circular on page 143 of evidence. See also memorandum sent to Clerk of House of Commons, and Clerk of the Senate, on April 16, 1915, as to guarding doors, etc. (see page 143 of evidence).

According to the evidence, there were on duty the night of the fire the usual number of uniformed men and one plain-clothes man. The custom in regard to the reading-room was to have two guards, one at the Commons entrance and one at the Senate entrance, but at 8.30 p.m. the guard at the Senate entrance was removed, and the guard at the Commons entrance continued.

Guards were stationed at all corridors and at the Speaker's door, and also upstairs at the visitors' gallery, and one at the entrance to the ladies' gallery.

A great deal of evidence has been taken and some of the witnesses have asserted with great positiveness that the fire was set, and as Chief Graham expressed it, "the fire was set and well set." The chief reasons for that opinion seem to have been the lightning-like rapidity with which the fire spread, and certain explosions which were heard by several witnesses.

After giving the matter most careful consideration, we are of the opinion that the ventilating system, consisting of a number of fans, and which was in full operation at the time the fire started, one exhaust being immediately under the centre of the reading-room, and the air coming in through the door and the opening in the glass and being drawn out through this exhaust had the effect of creating a very strong current which caused the rapid spread of the fire in the reading-room, and once the fire reached the corridors of the House of Commons (the ceilings of the corridors and the members' wardrobes lining the corridors being of white pine, and most inflammable) the operation of the fans in the House of Commons creating a draught through the corridors to the House of Commons would have the effect of spreading the fire with great rapidity.

There were a number of witnesses who testified to hearing explosions, and no doubt there were explosions from gases, electric lights, etc. John A. Pearson, Esq., one of the architects selected by the Government in connection with the restoration of the Parliament Buildings, in his evidence taken on the 5th May last, states that after a thorough examination of the ruins of the House of Commons he can find no evidence of explosions.

It having come to our knowledge that fires had been started not only in the United States but in Canada, by the use of certain chemicals, we had Edgar Stansfield, Esq., Chemist of the Fuel Testing Division of the Mines Branch, and Mr. Carter, make certain tests, and they found that chemicals could be used to start such a fire as that in the Parliament reading-room. They prepared liquids which when poured on a newspaper ignited spontaneously after periods varying from a few minutes to more than an hour. The liquids had a distinct odour, but this decreased rapidly after being poured on the paper, and a few minutes later would usually escape notice in a well-ventilated room. They found that there were other liquids obtainable which were free from odour.

We also had a practical test made of a fire started by chemicals and one started in the ordinary way by a match. This test was made in the presence of Francis Glass, Esq., M.P., whose evidence will be found on page 136. Mr. Glass, after seeing the two fires, the one started with a match and the other with the chemical preparation, stated

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that the fire in the reading-room started in a similar manner to the fire started by the chemicals. Then he was asked if he saw any difference in the appearance of the two fires, in the appearance of the flame. He answered, "Yes, the appearance of this one is more like it to me, I mean the one started with the chemicals."

It was clear to us that the fire started on the newspaper with the chemicals, once it started burned with great rapidity. The fire started with the match burned very much more slowly. The one started with the chemicals was much harder to extinguish than the one started with the match.

According to the evidence of several witnesses, one or two strangers were about the House on the evening the fire started. W. B. Northrup, Esq., K.C., M.P., was under the impression that he saw a stranger going down the corridor towards the reading-room shortly before the alarm was given. E. M. McDonald, Esq., K.C., M.P., in his evidence (page 149) states that about twenty-five minutes to nine as he was going through the main door of the Parliament Buildings to enter the lobby he was struck by the appearance and restless manner of a man who was standing on the ledge at the left door going into the lobby. The man was nervous and his eyes were shifty. He was impressed with the idea that the man was worried about something.

The Honourable Albert Seigny, in his evidence taken before the commission on 5th May last, tells of a man who purported to be a Frenchman and who spoke French, but who Mr. Seigny thought was a German, having on Monday preceding the fire, and he thinks on the day of the fire, come to his chamber desiring to have access to the buildings for the purpose of taking photographs. He refused this man's request. The day after the fire Mr. Seigny gave orders to the messenger, who was at the door when the man came in, to try and find him in Ottawa. The messenger reported that he was unable to find him.

Since Mr. Seigny's evidence your commissioners have made inquiries in regard to this man, and have obtained a report from the Dominion Police, who say that acting upon the report of Joseph Turcotte, the messenger at the Parliament Buildings, and being the messenger Mr. Seigny referred to, they located this man, who they ascertained was a photographer by trade and that he had been at the Parliament Buildings two years previous to the fire taking photographs, and they were satisfied from their investigation that this man had nothing to do with the fire. They have obtained his name, address, etc.

In regard to the other strangers referred to, the policemen on guard have no recollection of seeing them.

Your commissioners are of the opinion that there are many circumstances connected with this fire that lead to a strong suspicion of incendiarism, especially in view of the fact that the evidence is clear that no one was smoking in the reading-room for some time previous to the outbreak of fire, and also to the fact that the fire could not have occurred from defective electric wiring. But while your commissioners are of such opinion, there is nothing in the evidence to justify your commissioners in finding that the fire was maliciously set.

Your commissioners feel very strongly that it might be possible at a later date to obtain evidence (which they cannot reach at the present time) which might establish beyond question whether this fire was incendiary or accidental, and with the approval of Your Royal Highness, your commissioners would humbly suggest that this report be treated not as a final report but as an interim report, and that the commission be left open, and in the event of your commissioners being able to get further evidence at a later date that they be permitted to do so.

Your commissioners desire to place on record their sympathy with those bereaved owing to loss of life. Your commissioners also desire to place on record their appreciation of the assistance given to them by Col. A. P. Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, and his staff; Chief Graham, Chief of the City Fire Department,

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and his staff; Messrs. Stansfield and Carter, of the Mines Branch, and all witnesses and officials who came forward and voluntarily gave their testimony in this investigation.

Copy of evidence and exhibits accompany this report.

Respectfully submitted.

R. A. PRINGLE,

D. B. MacTAVISH,

Commissioners.

Dated at Ottawa, this 15th day of May, A.D. 1916.

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE.

OTTAWA, Thursday, February 10, 1916.

The Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the origin of the fire which destroyed the central Parliamentary Building at Ottawa, on Thursday, February 3, 1916, met at the City Hall, Ottawa, this morning at 10.30 o'clock.

PRESENT :—

ROBERT A. PRINGLE, Esquire, K.C.;	} <i>Commissioners.</i>
His Honour Judge DUNCAN BYRON MAC TAVISH,	

W. R. WHITE, Esquire, K.C., Counsel assisting the Commission.

Mr. PRINGLE, K.C. (Commissioner): Before calling witnesses and proceeding with regular business, I desire to say a word or two. His Honour Judge MacTavish and myself have been appointed by Royal Commission to conduct an inquiry into and concerning the origin of the recent disastrous fire which destroyed the Parliament Building at Ottawa, and to make a full investigation into all matters connected therewith, and we have been given full powers in regard to such investigation. I do not deem it necessary for us to say anything in regard to the great calamity which overtook us on the night of February 3—it is an event that will be memorable in making history. The material loss is great, but we all hope and we all know that in a few short months this building will be restored and will be probably more fitted to meet the conditions of the present day. What to us is the most appalling is the loss of life and our sympathy goes out to those who have been bereaved.

History is full of accounts of the devastation caused by fire in the different countries of the civilized world. We in Canada probably have been favoured; we have had no very great fires in this country. Most great fires have been found to be due, first, to the combustible nature of the contents of buildings and the materials of the buildings themselves, architectural defects in construction, and secondly, the lack of proper fire appliances. The Empire is at war and being at war there is naturally a tendency to suspect the enemy in connection with this fire. It will be our duty to inquire very fully and very carefully as to whether the enemy had anything to do with this fire or not. We know that fires have been discovered in the country to the south of us, that have been set in a very simple manner—we have knowledge of a fire a very short time ago occurring in the United States of America, where a specially prepared liquid was thrown casually over a mass of papers. That special liquid was so composed that after being on those papers, and possibly beyond the means of detection, that it created the fire. Whether anything of that sort occurred here or not, it will be the subject of this inquiry.

As I stated, we are at war. If we have been slumbering, and I do not for a moment say we have, then the fire which occurred on Thursday night should awaken us from our slumber and probably it is better that our slumbers should be disturbed than that a great disaster should overtake us, in the event of us being asleep.

However, I want more particularly to say, and the press to particularly note, that both His Honour Judge MacTavish and myself fully realize the responsibility resting on our shoulders in connection with this investigation. We will do all that is

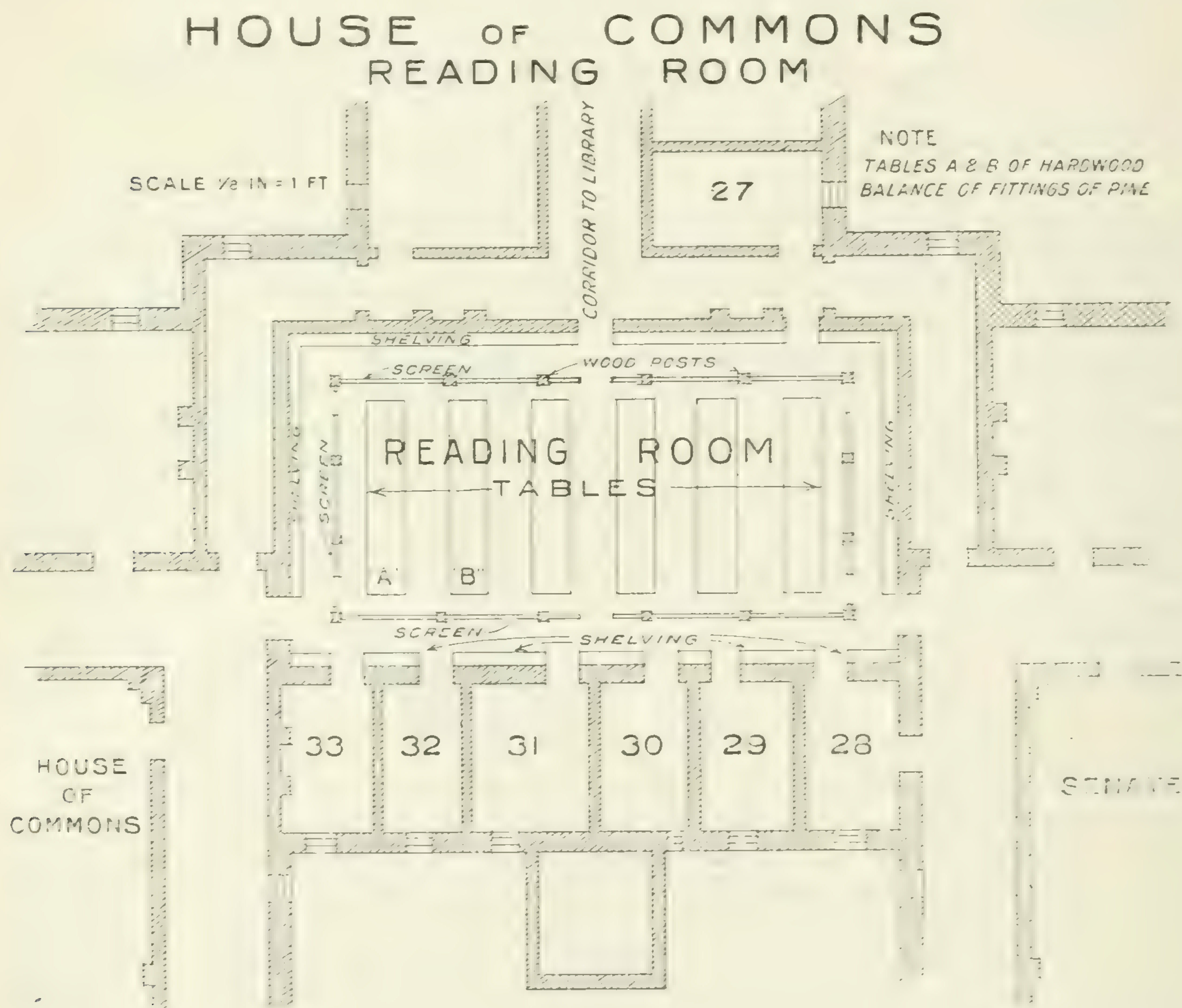
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humanly possible to do to get at the origin, but if any man, woman or child in this country has any knowledge that they think this Commission should have, then it is their duty as citizens of Canada to get into communication, either with the Commissioners, or the counsel, Mr. W. R. White, K.C., who is assisting us in this investigation. That is all I have to say in regard to this matter. Both of us appreciate to the full the responsibility that rests upon us, and we will do our utmost to carry out the work which is entrusted to us.

E. L. Horwood, Chief Architect of the Public Works Department, sworn:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You are producing a plan of the House of Commons building?—A. Yes. In submitting these plans, I may say that there have been alterations made from time to time, and although they are comparatively slight the plan may be regarded as correct



with the exception of these slight alterations, but approximately they are as nearly correct as we can get at the present day.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. This plan, Exhibit 1, is the basement of the building as before the fire started?—A. Yes.

Q. And Exhibit 2 is a plan of the ground floor upon which is situated the reading-room of the House of Commons and Senate Chamber?—A. Yes.

Q. Exhibit 3 is the first floor?—A. Yes.

Q. And Exhibit 4 the top floor?—A. Yes.

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Q. Will you point out where the reading-room is?—A. It is situated north of the main door and south of the library.

Q. It is marked "reading-room" on the plan.

Q. Now are you personally familiar with the construction of this building?—A. Not very.

Q. Who would be able to give us full information with regard to their construction and the material?—A. There are a number of men who would be able to do it—there is Mr. Ewart, the Chief Architect, and I think perhaps Mr. Wensley, the Engineer of the building.

Q. I suppose Mr. Ewart would be as familiar as anybody?—A. Yes. Lately we have had the building re-wired, and in doing that I suppose the construction would be bored through and the detail of the construction would be found out more by the staff than anybody else.

Q. What were their names?—A. Mr. Wilson was the Chief Electrician in charge of that work—he would have a very good knowledge of the construction of the walls and floors and things of that kind.

Q. According to this, the reading-room is a building of 70.7 feet by 36.2 feet?—A. Yes, equalling an area of 2,481 square feet.

Q. What would be the height of the walls?—A. That I could not say.

By Mr. Pringle:

Q. I see you have marked very clearly here the occupants of all the different rooms?—A. Yes.

Q. The Speaker's Chambers and the different rooms, so that we will be able to follow closely?—A. Yes, and in addition to that I have taken a list of all the occupants.

(List of Room Numbers and by whom occupied produced as Exhibit No. 5.)

Q. It has already been noted that you are the Chief Architect of the Public Works Department?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Lieutenant-Colonel HENRY R. SMITH, I.S.O., Serjeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have been Serjeant-at-Arms of the House of Commons how long?—A. Twenty-four years.

Q. You are very familiar with the place in which the fire is said to have originated and the surroundings?—A. Yes.

Q. The reading-room of the House of Commons?—A. Yes, I am quite familiar with all of it.

Q. Were you in the House or in the building on the night of the fire?—A. Yes, I was out of the Chamber, but close at hand in the Clerk's office.

Q. Where would that be?—A. The Clerk's office is in the front of the building.

Q. You were not in the House but in the Clerk's office?—A. Yes, talking to him, I was there two or three minutes.

Q. That is in the front of the building?—A. Yes.

Q. When did you first, or how was your attention first attracted to the fire?—A. I went to my own office and got some papers that I wanted and then started back and was met by a dense volume of smoke and some heat—the condition of the atmosphere was then suffocating and I could not get any further.

Q. Where was your office?—A. In the West end of the building but downstairs on the ground floor—it is immediately below the Western part.

Q. Downstairs in the basement?—A. What you call the basement, yes—my floor is on the level of the ground.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. What we want more particularly from you, Colonel Smith, is whether you are the person charged with the responsibility of seeing whether these buildings are properly protected, and we want to know the staff and who they were.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. But coming up from your office you could not go on?—A. No.

Q. Did you hear anything?—A. I heard voices calling “Fire, fire.”

Q. Can you fix the time?—A. Yes, that was then just about nine o’clock, and I was absent between four and five minutes.

Q. What is your duty in regard to this building?—A. I have general charge of the House of Commons premises, charge of anything they contain, and am head of the messengers, and sessional staff of servants, pages, charwomen, and all that, and the restaurant.

Q. Have you anything to do with the fire protection?—A. Yes.

Q. What is your duty in regard to that?—A. In conjunction with the Public Works Department we had various engines about the buildings—I think they are called Babcocks—and we have men instructed in what is called “fire drill” to make use of them, and then of course, under the direction of the Public Works Department, there were large hose all through the building capable of being turned on at a moment’s notice.

Q. How many of these extinguishers were there?—A. Upwards to twenty.

Q. Were there any in the vicinity of the reading-room?—A. Yes, I think there were two, one at each end.

Q. Inside or outside the room?—A. I am not sure, but just inside or outside—very close at hand.

Q. I suppose you are not familiar or cannot say how many stands of hose there were?—A. No, but the provisions were amply sufficient to reach any point in the building.

Q. And was there any staff whose duty it was to look after the water as well as the fire extinguishers?—A. Yes, the Public Works staff and also the Dominion constables were instructed in that regard—of course what actually happened was that they did go to work but were speedily stifled.

Q. You could not form any idea how that staff was officered or manned?—A. No, that would be outside of my duties. It would be composed only of my own men.

Q. And your own men would have charge of the fire extinguishers?—A. To that extent. At the suggestion of Mr. Hunter, Deputy Minister of Public Works, they were drilled in their use some time ago.

Q. There was a large amount of inflammable material in this reading-room?—A. An immensity of it.

Q. Were the papers hung up or on files?—A. In some cases hung on the wall and placed on the top of a desk and beneath the desks—in fact the room was over-filled—there were too many papers in it for the size of the room.

Q. I do not know whether I asked you if you considered the provision for the extinction of fires sufficient?—A. As far as human ingenuity goes, they were sufficient, but the fact remains the room itself was of an extremely inflammable nature—the oil-cloth on the floor and the paint and papers all tended to make it a place that if a fire started it might readily get beyond control in a short time.

Q. Was the wood painted?—A. Oiled and varnished.

Q. Which would render it more inflammable?—A. Yes.

Q. It was only a short distance from the reading-room to the east corridor of the House of Commons?—A. The reading-room opens into these corridors.

Q. And there is only a short distance to the corner of the Chamber?—A. Yes, only ten or fifteen feet.

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Q. There was a large number of cabinets used?—A. Yes, also varnished wood.

Q. How many men did you have under your control—firemen?—A. There are three.

Q. Were they the ordinary attendants?—A. Two of them, the Curator, Mr. Deacon, and Mr. Hugg, are on the clerk's staff, Mr. Hugg is the assistant curator, and Mr. Spencer, behind me, is on my staff. Those three men divided the duty between them. They are Stanley S. Spencer, John L. Deacon, and Claire Hugg.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. What were their duties?—A. They were in charge of the reading-room, and they had to look after the files, putting the papers on and taking them off.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. How many men altogether did you have whose duty it was to look after the extinguishing of fires if they occurred?—A. I am afraid I cannot tell exactly.

Q. But give it to us as near as you can?—A. There would be nine or ten who, according to my orders, were instructed in the use of this fire apparatus.

Q. They would be apart altogether from the men who would be under the Public Works?—A. Yes, but we were always acting in conjunction with the Public Works.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. It is not clear in my mind upon whom rested the responsibility of policing this building, according to that—did it rest on you or on the Chief Commissioner of the Dominion Police?—A. The Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police provided us with men for that purpose.

Q. Who requisitioned these men—did you, or did he take the responsibility of assigning the proper number of men?—A. In some cases I asked for them.

Q. There is not a divided authority, is there—the authority is yours as Sergeant-at-Arms to look after the House of Commons Building, and if you wanted police you requisitioned the Chief Commissioner?—A. Yes, and he was always kind and prompt in that.

Q. How many Dominion police have you on duty in the House of Commons?—A. There was one on each corridor of the Chamber downstairs, one at the Speaker's door, one at each angle, and upstairs one at the entrance of the visitors' gallery, and one at the entrance to the ladies' gallery.

Q. As custodian of the building, did you consider you had it amply policed?—A. Absolutely so, and I want to make a remark here that it was always understood between Colonel Sherwood and myself, that such men of his force that he sent there should be under my orders while they were in the building.

Q. Quite so—then you considered the building was amply policed?—A. Certainly, and if I could make any comment on it I would say it was rather over-policed.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Were these men present during the whole time or only when the House was in session?—A. Those I mention were only during the session of Parliament.

Q. I mean the session of the House?—A. Well, I mean when the House was in session.

Q. Then you had other men of your own after the House arose?—A. Yes, men of my own on duty all night.

Q. How many?—A. As night watchmen only two, but then of course the doors were locked and the building closed.

By Mr. Pringle:

Q. Do you know whether these fire extinguishers were tested from time to time?—A. I do not know; I cannot speak of that, I am afraid probably not, but I cannot say positively.

Q. Were these corridors cleaned out every night?—A. Every morning, they began at six and worked until 8.30.

Q. Reading-room and all?—A. Yes, and every corridor and room in the building.

Q. How many men were always on duty in the reading-room apart from the policeman at the door?—A. Never less than one, and sometimes two.

Q. There could not be very much less than one?—A. There were only three.

Q. But there was always one?—A. Oh yes, certainly—you will have every one of these men before you.

Q. Is there anything else you think of that you ought to tell us?—A. I think I have gone fully over the ground. I could not say anything else except of course what others reported to me.

Furthermore witness deposeth not.

FRANCIS R. GLASS, member of Parliament, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a member of the House of Commons?—A. I am.

Q. You were present in the House on the evening of February third?—A. I was.

Q. Were you in or near the reading-room on that evening?—A. I was in the reading-room.

Q. At what hour?—A. Very close to nine o'clock—I do not know the exact time.

Q. Some time between eight and nine o'clock?—A. Yes. I could define it closer—between 8.30 and 9.

Q. Was there anybody else in the reading-room when you were there?—A. When I entered the room Mr. Northrup was in there, standing at the first desk inside the reading-room.

Q. How long did you remain there?—A. I do not think I was there more than ten minutes.

Q. When you left the reading-room who was in it?—A. When I left the officer was in getting the extinguisher.

Q. The fire originated while you were in there?—A. Yes.

Q. How did it originate or what did you see?—A. As I passed into the reading-room about ten minutes before the fire broke out, I passed down the first desk along the wall, to see if there were any London papers on file, and when I saw they were not I passed on to the second desk where the Ottawa papers were on file, and on the left-hand corner of the second desk I remained reading. To give an idea of how much time I was there, I read the Corridor Notes of the Journal and followed up the Appam report. I was absorbed in reading that, and heard the door opening and people passing in and out, and no person passed in front of me but Sir Thomas White. He came in within two or three minutes after I was in and passed behind me, between the two desks and on to the third desk. He gave a casual glance at the files and I gathered from his attitude the files he wanted were not there, and he retired. I lifted my head as I saw him at the file opposite to me and spoke to him and continued reading and had been only reading a short part of this paragraph when I felt a wave of heat passing up alongside me, as if from a hot air register, and I turned around and almost immediately with my turning I smelt the burning of paper and I stooped down and saw the smoke coming out, and my recollection is that this burning was on the second horizontal part of the desk, of the one behind me—it was well in on the pile of papers. I put up my hands and called the caretaker, thinking they would be around the other desks and no one responded, and I ran to the door and called to the officer and he came in and looked

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at it and rushed out again and then I said: "Where are the fire extinguishers or hose?" and said they had better ring in an alarm. He went out to announce the alarm and to get help and I presume possibly to get the extinguisher—anyway he called the alarm and almost instantaneously there was other help, but he got there ahead and went down the reading-room to the Senate and got an extinguisher off the wall and ran back. I was still in the room—as he came down with it the fire was spreading rapidly and I thought it time the members should be notified, and I stepped outside the door just as he started to operate the extinguisher on the fire—now what happened there I do not know but in an instant the fire gained headway and seemed to develop into a flame of smoke and fire.

By Mr. Pringle:

Q. You were standing at what desk?—A. At the left-hand side of the second desk in the reading room facing the Senate Chamber.

Q. That would be the second desk from the end of the room next to the Senate Chamber?—A. No, next to the Commons Chamber.

Q. Then where the fire originated was where?—A. At the first desk in the reading-room in the rear of me.

Q. You were facing the east?—A. Yes.

Q. And the fire originated at the first desk?—A. Yes.

Q. Had anybody been at that desk, the first desk, during the time you were in the reading-room?—A. When I went in there Mr. Northrup was at the front of that desk—those desks have a double front, and he was at the front of the first desk facing the Senate Chamber.

Q. That would be the west side of the desk?—A. Yes.

Q. And very close to the entrance to the Commons corridor?—A. Yes, and he was reading the second or third file from that corner.

Q. Had anybody else but Mr. Northrup been at that desk during the time you were there?—A. I heard people coming in and out and did not turn to observe them—I was reading.

Q. Then there were people passing in and out?—A. Yes.

Q. But you do not know who they were?—A. Only Sir Thomas White.

Q. You had gone in there about 8.30 or between 8.30 and 9?—A. Yes.

Q. How long had you been at the desk reading when you felt this fire?—I do not think more than from seven to ten minutes.

Q. And did you see the fire?—A. When I turned around.

Q. Where was the fire when you saw it?—A. On the horizontal shelf, on the files underneath the regular desk, well in through the centre, on the second shelf.

Q. Had it gained headway then?—A. It was covering a space of from 15 to 18 inches.

Q. The reason is, I have an article here in which it says:—

Mr. Glass was in the reading-room at the time of the fire. He entered it from the main corridor and took a position at the second desk inside the door to read the Ottawa papers. The fire started directly behind him, and from the way in which it started, Mr. Glass thinks it altogether improbable that it could have begun from a cigar or cigarette. While Mr. Glass was standing at the second desk from the entrance, he noticed that a man came into the desk directly behind him—the first one from the main corridor entrance. The man passed out, but the member did not notice his appearance.

A. Well, that part of the interview is incorrect, as I say during the time I was there I heard the door opening and shutting and did not see or hear any person except Sir Thomas White, because he passed in front of me, but from the time I entered I did not see any person coming in or going out.

Q. Then it says:—

It was just a few minutes after the man went out that Mr. Glass felt a hot wave about his feet. He looked around and saw the papers in the middle of the lower shelf on the first desk burning. The fire was not on the edge of the papers, and for this reason Mr. Glass does not think the files could have caught from the end of a cigar or cigarette.

A. The interview is hardly correct, because interviews are very rarely correct—I said it was hardly probable that a man shaking a cigar and dropping ashes would drop it into the centre, but it would be possible for a man passing to use a match and then shake it and throw it into the centre—that is quite a possible thing.

Q. Then I saw another interview in one of the Toronto papers—I happened to be there that day—the following day—in which you stated that you saw the fire start and it was very small and could have been put out without difficulty, but you called a messenger?—A. That statement is not correct. I do not know who I was talking to that night, but I think it was in the telegraph office, and I said my impression was, when I first saw the fire, it could have been smothered with a blanket or a coat, it was so small—it was not convenient to get at it, but my first thought was an extinguisher would more effectively stop it than anything else.

Q. In view of the knowledge we have in regard to chemical preparations that can be put on paper, and create fire, or I do not suppose you are in a position to express an opinion as to how the fire started?—A. Not the slightest.

Q. Did you see anybody there with a lighted cigar or cigarette or anything with fire?—A. Nothing whatever—I didn't even know I was alone in the room until I turned around.

Q. I have before me, whether correct or not, information in regard to a confession made by a criminal in the United States of America, where a brownish liquid was used to sprinkle on papers or other inflammable material that would remain there undetected and after remaining for a certain time it would cause the material to burst into flames—that is why I am trying to get exactly at what did occur then to see if any possibility of such a thing being used in the reading-room?—A. I would be quite possible but I did not notice any odour of any kind except the burning of paper as I turned around.

Q. And you did not notice anybody there with cigars or cigarettes or anything likely to cause fire?—A. No, sir, as I say I did not notice who came in and passed out.

Q. But you did hear parties coming and going and passing that desk?—A. Yes.

Q. Did that fire spread rapidly?—A. For the first few seconds it did not seem to spread faster than ordinary paper would burn, but it seemed to become wonderfully accelerated in blazing from the time the officer ran to get the extinguisher.

Q. Then when the officer came back with the extinguisher what effect did that have on the fire?—A. As I could see it he had not even time to operate it, for the instant he held it in position he was shot back—the flame enveloped him.

Q. Could you give any idea of the colour of that smoke?—A. Only that it was bright red—I took it for fire—in fact my impression was it seemed as if the smoke turned to fire almost instantly.

Q. Of course you are not a chemist and cannot tell us what the colour of smoke might be from a chemical preparation?—A. No, sir.

Q. But you could speak from the fact in saying that the smoke seemed to be a very reddish colour?—A. Yes—as soon as it developed sufficiently to get through the room it seemed to turn almost like into a blaze.

Q. Did it spread with great rapidity to the other papers and did the flame burst in the same way, that is, a blaze from the other papers?—A. The extinguisher was put on at the time I am speaking of when suddenly there was the burst into flame. I just got out the door and thought the Commons should be notified and turned to go down—there but before I got to the Chamber I felt what was called that explosion as if con-

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fined smoke gave kind of a puffout—it would be called an explosion, but it sounded like a sudden release of a big volume of dense smoke and then the corridors became filled, and I announced it to the House, and I could not return the same way—the corridor was filled with smoke.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Just one little point—the papers in which you say the fire was were papers not on file but that had been stored there?—A. As I understand it the leading dailies are on the top of the desk and the other papers from the smaller towns, weeklies and others, are placed on horizontal shelves—a series of them.

Q. How many thicknesses of paper would there be?—A. That would vary.

Q. The reason I ask is this: a batch of papers laying one on top of the other does not burn very rapidly beyond the original one on fire, but if thin they would?—A. The files underneath in that position vary from sometimes one to sometimes four and five.

Q. But there would be only a thin layer?—A. Yes, every file would be spread out.

Q. The shelves inside of that desk were all wooden shelves?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

STANLEY SCOTT SPENCER, being duly sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are Assistant Curator?—A. Mr. Hugg is the assistant and I come after him.

Q. And it was your turn in the reading-room that evening?—A. Yes.

Q. When did you go on duty?—A. Seven o'clock.

Q. Were you in the reading-room all the time?—A. No, sir. We have a room where we handle our papers, off the reading-room, Room 30, next to the Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms.

Q. It is marked "Curator of Reading-room"?—A. Yes.

Q. That was in connection with the reading-room though?—A. Yes.

Q. You heard the evidence of Mr. Glass—how far would the door of that room be from the desk where Mr. Glass was standing, reading?—A. It is about the centre of the room—that is the Curator's room seems to be in the centre of the room and the first table where Mr. Glass was reading the Ottawa papers—

Q. How far would it be from the desk where he was?—A. Thirty or forty feet.

Q. That is your room would be that from where he was?—A. Yes.

Q. When did you go into that room?—A. It must have been about a quarter to nine.

Q. Was Mr. Glass in the reading-room when you went in?—A. I was putting on my papers when Mr. Glass came in—I spoke to Mr. Northrup before that—he was standing about where the papers were that went on fire, and I said: "I guess we will have a late night to-night," and he said that he was done for the night, and Mr. Glass came in just after that and Mr. Glass said: "They are on fish to-night," and Mr. Northrup said: "It is not a very appropriate night for fish, they should have waited until Friday." Mr. Glass went to the Ottawa papers and I just left them and went into my room.

Q. When you left the only two people were Mr. Northrup and Mr. Glass in there?—A. Yes, that I noticed.

Q. How long did you remain there in the room?—A. I could not have been long in the room.

Q. And when you came out, where did you go then?—A. I heard the noise of somebody running in the hall.

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Q. Did you hear Mr. Glass calling you?—A. I did not hear who called—I heard somebody holler.

Q. Did you hear anybody call you as caretaker?—A. No, sir.

Q. Was Mr. Glass in the reading-room when you came out of your room?—A. No, sir.

Q. And when you came out of your room it was because you heard somebody—where?—A. I do not know exactly; I heard somebody holler, as I thought, "Fire," and I ran and saw the fire and started to pull away the papers and I saw I could not do anything as it was running up the walls.

Q. You started to pull the papers away?—A. Yes.

Q. These papers were in a file?—A. Yes.

Q. What kind of files?—A. Wooden files.

Q. And did you pull any of them away?—A. Yes.

Q. And you say it went up the side of the room?—A. Yes, and I could not do anything, and I ran to the desk——

Q. Did the desk above it take fire?—A. I could not say, because when that roar went up I could not see very well with the smoke. I could not get out by the Commons corridor and I ran the other way.

Q. That would be the opposite side from where the fire was?—A. Yes.

Q. And then did you try to make your way around?—A. I grabbed my coat and hat and came out—I came out through the flames and got my ears and face and hands burned, and I fell over Mr. Burrell's secretary when coming out into the Senate side.

Q. Then were there any fire extinguishers on the corridor at that side?—A. There was only one in the reading-room and it was on the Senate side.

Q. Did you get it?—A. No, there were two men in uniform who had run ahead for the extinguisher when I got up to it.

Q. Were they going towards the reading-room?—A. They were at the end towards the Commons Chamber where the fire started.

Q. You went out on the Senate side, and you say there was one extinguisher on that Senate side?—A. That is the one they had, I believe.

Q. Where did they get it—you say they were coming from the Commons side?—A. No, I say they were on the Commons side with the extinguisher.

Q. How did they get there so quickly?—A. It would be them probably I heard hollering when I ran out.

Q. Why do you say it must be that extinguisher?—A. I would not be sure whether or not it was that one, only I heard them say that they got an extinguisher from that side.

Q. Who were they?—A. I think it was Sergeant Carroll—one of them told me that anyway.

Q. There is a door leading out to the corridor there from the reading-room to the Senate?—A. Yes, they would have to run right past the door of the room I was in.

Q. And how would they get around then—is there any passage around until they got around to the front of the building?—A. They would run through to the Commons side—it was clear at first to the Commons side where the fire started first.

Q. There is a board partition along there shown on the plan by pencil?—A. Yes, there is a partition all around the room and papers one above the other hanging up around that wall.

Q. That would be still inside the room?—A. Oh, yes. They could pass by there. The fire started here, I understand, at the first table.

Q. When you came out from the Curator's room, did you go to the reading-room?—A. I ran down there.

Q. This partition is only a framework to hold papers?—A. Yes.

Q. What I want to know is, these men if they got this extinguisher here, they would have to run across here?—A. Yes, that is where they were.

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Q. Why should they run through the whole seventy feet across the room to get to a fire there when they could have gone inside?—A. I do not know that.

Q. Then you really do not know where they got the extinguisher?—A. No.

Q. When you went out you did not go to see where the extinguisher was got from?—A. No. I saw they had one when I went out.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You were on duty that night?—A. Yes.

Q. What time did you go on duty?—A. Seven o'clock.

Q. Did you see anybody in the reading-room that night smoking or with a lighted cigar or cigarette?—A. I do not remember that I did, but I have seen a good many members going in smoking.

Q. With lighted cigars or cigarettes?—A. Yes.

Q. Would it have been possible for a man to enter there and place a liquid on those papers without you detecting him?—A. If I see any strangers there I put them out—I have orders to that effect.

Q. But strangers have gone in there?—A. Yes, but not lately since policeman are on the two doors.

Q. You think you have the room so guarded, that it would be almost impossible for a stranger to get in there and distribute liquid on these papers?—A. I think so.

Q. Was either Mr. Glass or Mr. Northrup smoking?—A. I could not say—I did not see either of them smoking.

Q. Did you see either of them with a cigar or cigarette?—A. Not to my knowledge.

Q. If you had, don't you think you would detect it?—A. I might have, but as a rule I do not pay any attention to them because if nobody else can't stop them I can't.

Q. Who called your attention to the fire?—A. When I was inside the Curator's room I heard somebody running and hollering.

Q. The Curator's room is where?—A. Almost in the centre of the reading-room with the door open—we have it for sorting our papers, and I heard someone running and hollering.

Q. That is the first thing that drew your attention to the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. What did you find on going into the reading-room?—A. I ran up to the end and I saw the fire and could not get on the other side, and pulled the files from underneath the shelves to try and keep them from catching one to the other, and two men, of whom all I could see was the uniform, came with the fire extinguisher.

Q. How far advanced was the fire when you got on the scene?—A. When I started up that way I could not go between the wall and the first table.

Q. And then you grabbed the files that were on file?—A. Yes, from this side—I stood there until I could not stand it any longer.

Q. Had it spread with great rapidity?—A. Yes.

Q. These files are lying flat on the shelves underneath?—A. Yes, and the others on top.

Q. And the file that evidently caught fire first was lying flat on the shelf?—A. That is the way they were burning.

Q. And you say they burned with great rapidity—did you notice the colour of the smoke?—A. No, but it seemed to be kind of black and bluish smoke to me.

Q. Mr. Glass says it was reddish?—A. It was cloudy to me—I could not see well with the heat, when I started out.

Q. Did the extinguisher have any effect on the flames?—A. No, I thought it made more flames because the papers are loose and I imagined that it loosened up the papers more and the fire blew right along.

Q. It made more smoke?—A. It seemed to, and to make more fire.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Are there ventilators there?—A. Two in the skylight and both open.

Q. And they are worked with fans, or driven with fans?—A. Yes, from below.

Q. And they were working that night?—A. I think so—they are generally always working.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Had the fire, at the time you first saw it, got below the shelf upon which the papers were resting that were on fire?—A. I could not say that it got to the floor.

Q. That is it—did you see any fire coming from the floor up?—A. I could not say as to that side, but there was not on the side from which I pulled the papers out.

Q. The doors leading to the Senate lobby are similar to those leading to the House of Commons lobby—swinging doors?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there a policeman standing in both or only in one?—A. Only at one, after 8.30.

Q. Was there a policeman at both doors, up to the time of this fire?—A. No, sir.

Q. At what door was there a policeman?—A. The Commons door.

Q. Then was there anything to prevent a man going in from the Senate side and sprinkling if he wanted to a liquid on these papers?—A. He might, but he could not very well get to the other end.

Q. You were in the curator's room, and if no policeman on the east door what would prevent a man going in and putting a liquid on these papers?—A. The policeman on the other door would naturally see him coming in because he is generally watching.

Q. You think the policeman on the other door having full sight of both doors of the room could see if anybody entered, if on guard?—A. Yes, sir.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. If he came in and was not seen he would have to come in on the Senate side—there is no policeman there?—A. Not after 8.30.

Q. And the fire started near the Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. How far from the door leading to the Commons?—A. About ten feet only.

Q. And a man naturally would scatter it close to where he came in and go back out the way he came?—A. You would think he would.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Is that policeman always on duty or only when the House is sitting?—A. They are on duty when the House is sitting.

Q. Would they be on duty during recess between six and eight o'clock?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. So there was a man on duty at the time the fire broke out?—A. Yes.

Q. A policeman at the door leading to the House of Commons corridor?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The thing is, would it be natural for a person to pass all through the reading room and do this thing at the other end? The files were the same all along and he might as well have put it near the Senate door as to walk the whole distance through the reading-room?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You saw no one else there except Mr. Northrup and Mr. Glass?—A. They were the last I saw.

Q. You were not smoking?—A. No, sir.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

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C. R. STEWART, door-keeper, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What is your position in the House of Commons?—A. Chief door-keeper of the House of Commons.

Q. You remember the night of the fire, of course?—A. Yes.

Q. How was your attention first called to it?—A. I was standing outside the door in the lobby, and one of the policemen next the door announced a fire in the reading-room. I ran down and saw the fire at the table—I was at the opposite side of Mr. Spencer, pulling the files out—I kept pulling the files out—to stop the fire, and in the meantime it was going up and it caught in the walls and went up over my head, and the draught started and it came over my head, so I thought it time to get out. I went to the Chamber and no one seemed to know about it. Mr. Simpson, the reporter was in the House, and I announced a terrific fire, and for everybody to get out, and Mr. Simpson took down my words on the “Hansard.” When I got to the door I found I had forgotten my coat and I went back to get it, but I could not get it—the blaze was coming up near Sir Robert’s room.

Q. What time would that be?—A. “Hansard” has nine o’clock, when I made that announcement.

Q. You say Mr. Spencer was working at the opposite side of the desk to you?—A. Yes.

Q. Was the fire confined at that time to a particular shelf?—A. Yes, that is all I saw.

Q. And you say the fire started to go up the wall—what wall?—A. That wooden partition—the papers are hung by their backs and their leaves are all loose and the blaze caught them.

Q. The fire caught from where it was burning originally in among these papers hanging on this wooden partition and immediately went to the ceiling?—A. Yes, and came out the door too.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. I cannot say that I did—there was a considerable draught and the doors were forced open—it was a roaring noise—the corridor seemed to act like a flue with a tremendous draught.

Q. Did you notice it coming out of the reading-room door?—A. Yes.

Q. Where did it catch first?—A. Going along the corridors—I guess it caught in the members’ wardrobes. They were made of pine and everything there was ready to catch.

Q. Did you see a policeman there with an extinguisher?—A. When I went in they were running for the hose and extinguishers. I heard them coming with them, and I was too busy pulling away the papers to notice. I know they were there because I heard them.

Q. Do you know in what direction they were running for the extinguisher?—A. Down towards the smoking-room—just a small corridor from the reading-room.

Q. Towards the Senate?—A. No, it would be more west of the reading-room.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

DAVID EWART, I.S.O., sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What is your position?—A. Consulting Architect for the Department of Public Works.

Q. You have been a long time connected with the building destroyed?—A. Yes, since 1871.

Q. Do you know anything of the material of which these buildings are constructed?
A. Principally white pine.

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Q. But the walls?—A. They are stone and brick.

Q. The walls of the reading-room, for example?—A. The outside walls of the reading-room were stone and brick.

Q. And the floors of course wood?—A. Yes.

Q. And all the fittings of the reading-room were wood?—A. Yes, and the gallery of the reading-room.

Q. There was a gallery around it?—A. Yes.

Q. Was that of pine too?—A. Yes.

Q. Was it oiled and varnished?—A. Yes.

Q. And exceedingly inflammable?—A. Yes.

Q. You have heard the description by the witnesses who were present when the fire started, of how it started, that it started on the shelves under the reading tables—you are familiar with the place there?—A. Yes.

Q. And it caught, notwithstanding their efforts, on the files in the walls and went up the walls?—A. Yes.

Q. What would say from your experience and taking into consideration the character of the wood-work and the walls?—A. That room was changed when the Supreme Court was instituted—that is where they held the first Supreme Court, in that same room, and it was changed to its present shape then.

Q. I do not suppose you intend to suggest that as a reason for any bad luck?—A. Oh no—but I mean at that date we had no steel files and no steel construction—it was a long while ago.

Q. What would you say as to the partitions and desks and the whole thing?—A. They were very inflammable.

Q. And the statement of these witnesses, Mr. Spencer and the last witness, are reasonable, that the fire when it once caught on the varnish, and oil, and wood, would go quickly, as they described?—A. Yes—I think one of the causes of the fire spreading so rapidly was the ceiling of the corridors, which were all wood and the members' wardrobes.

Q. That is, after it got out of the reading-room?—A. exactly.

Q. But I am speaking now of the reading-room just in order to see if you corroborate their idea—the fire was a small one apparently at the start when Mr. Glass saw it, and when the assistant caretaker saw it, and the guard tried to extinguish it, but it caught in the pile of papers and went up like a flash?—A. That is what I say—I say it is a very reasonable statement.

Q. And when it did get out your idea is it rolled along with the ceilings of the corridors of the Commons and the members' cabinets?—A. Yes.

Q. Do you know anything as to the fire protection, the method of the fire protection adopted by the Department?—A. They had a fire-alarm system in every room.

Q. That connects with the city fire-alarm?—A. First to a register in the main hall of the building and at the same time with the city.

Q. And did they have any sprinkling system in the building?—A. None.

Q. Did you know the hydrants there?—A. I cannot say I have been well acquainted with them—there have been various inspections given on them from time to time, and the City fire chief has at various times looked over the place and suggested where to put them, and we have done that.

Q. Did you put them where he suggested?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were quite satisfied that there were sufficient hydrants to cover the fire area?—A. I think so.

Q. Do you know anything about whether the Department exercised any authority over the men engaged in the building in attending to the fire apparatus, or whether they left it to certain parties?—A. It is principally left to Colonel Sherwood.

Q. To the Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. And the Serjeant-at-Arms?—A. Yes.

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Q. I suppose it is jointly—you all jointly work together?—A. Yes.

Q. You furnish the apparatus required and they furnish the men?—A. Yes.

Q. When they require anything they make a requisition to the Department of Public Works and they supply it?—A. Yes.

Q. There are a number of ventilator systems by means of fans?—A. Yes.

Q. Run by electricity?—A. Yes.

Q. There are ventilator shafts in different rooms?—A. For the chamber itself there are two ventilator shafts—in the east, and one in the west—and the fresh air is taken in there and then it was washed.

Q. After it passed through the chamber?—A. No, before it went into the chamber—sprayed—and then it is driven down the chamber and extracted under the members' feet. Each recess is an extraction. That is where it was extracted.

Q. Was there any fan connected with the reading room?—A. I do not think so—the only place where it was extracted from was the Commons Chamber.

Q. And you think there are no ventilator shafts there although the caretaker says there are?—A. I do not think so—but I consider the reason the smoke didn't rise was owing to the Commons drawing it down—the fans were running when the fire started.

Q. And the fans would have the tendency to draw the smoke down?—A. Yes, into the chamber.

Q. From the corridors?—A. From everywhere.

Q. These fans are operating underneath?—A. Yes, they are in connection with the boiler room.

Q. Are the corridors also connected with these fans?—A. When the doors are open they are connected with it.

Q. You think those fans would have the effect of drawing the smoke through the corridors?—A. Yes. The fans were not immediately under the chamber—a little to one side in the boiler room, but of course the flues are under the chamber to the fans.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Taking your whole knowledge of the place, it was a pretty dangerous place to start a fire?—A. Very.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. If one wanted to burn that building, they could not have selected a better part than the reading room?—A. Unless the library.

Q. Would not the reading room have more inflammable matter to start with—loose newspapers—more inflammable matter confined to a smaller space?—A. Yes.

Q. As a matter of fact, those buildings are full of combustible and inflammable matter?—A. Yes.

Q. In the days when these buildings were built, they did not build fireproof buildings? Such as we are having to-day?—A. No.

Q. Do we have to-day an absolutely fireproof building?—A. As a fireproof building, but if you fill a building full of combustible matter it is not fireproof.

Q. You can make walls fireproof?—A. Yes.

Q. But if you fill it with combustible matter a fire will occur just the same?—A. Yes.

Q. Is that woodwork varnished there every year?—A. It was varnished very often.

Q. And that makes it very inflammable?—A. Very.

Q. I am informed and instructed that the floors were all shellacked?—A. Yes.

Q. Is not that a very inflammable material?—A. It is—there is no doubt about that.

Q. Would the burning of these varnishes and shellac, would that cause a great volume of smoke?—A. Oh, yes.

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Q. Much more smoke than the burning of a plain wood floor unvarnished?—A. Oh, yes.

Q. You hadn't a sprinkler system in the building?—A. No.

Q. Was it ever considered, the advisability of putting in a moderate up-to-date sprinkling system?—A. Not that I remember.

Q. Would it have been practicable and feasible?—A. In some places you could but in other places it would be difficult.

Q. But could it have been done in this reading-room, for instance?—A. I believe it might have.

Q. But you were Chief Architect of Public Works to a very short time ago and now Consulting Architect, and as such you never considered the advisability of doing it?—A. No.

Q. But you did consider the putting in of up to date fire extinguishers?—A. Yes.

Q. And those you had in?—A. Yes.

Q. And also in connection with the water—you had a good system? The new wing is practically fireproof is it?—A. Yes. Of course it might be made a little more so. All there is that is not fireproof are the doors—it stood very well; there is nothing wrong with it.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. What seemed to have saved the library was the metal doors?—A. Yes.

Q. Those have only been put on in late years?—A. It is some years ago. But they were put on since that building was put up.

Q. If metal doors had been shutting out the reading room from these corridors, what do you think would have happened?—A. I am afraid the fire would have got over the top of the doors, owing to the construction—it might have saved it for a little while, to give them a chance, but of course, judging from what we hear about it, supposing there were metal doors there it is not likely they would have been shut.

Q. Why—would there not be time to shut them?—A. Because people get so confused they hardly know what to do.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

The investigation thereupon adjourned for luncheon.

After luncheon:

THOMAS SMITH MOORE, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a Dominion constable?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. I understand you were on duty at the reading-room door when the fire occurred on the 3rd of February?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. At what time did it start?—A. As near as I can say between 8.45 and 9.

Q. When were you first aware that there was a fire there?—A. When a man inside the room called out that there was a fire.

Q. Previous to that how long had you been on duty?—A. From 7.30.

Q. That would be an hour and a quarter—had you seen any strangers going into that reading-room?—A. No, sir.

Q. From where you were standing at the door on the Common side of the reading-room, could you see across that passage-way to the door leading to the Senate?—A. Yes, sir, I could.

Q. And did you see any strangers going into the reading-room from either entrance?—A. No, sir.

Q. Who did you see, if anybody, in that reading-room?—A. None in particulars except members.

Q. Could you give the names?—A. No, sir, we don't pay particular attention to them.

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Q. You were here when Mr. Glass was examined this morning?—A. I could not remember seeing him there.

Q. Do you know Mr. Northrup?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see him there?—A. I may have, but I do not remember.

Q. I suppose you have a general idea of the members—you know them by sight and members pass you, as a matter of course?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there any lady in there?—A. No, sir, I didn't see any lady.

Q. Well, you cannot say who the member was who said there was a fire there?—A. I would not say for certain—when I saw Mr. Glass here this morning it came to me that he was the man.

Q. Then what did you do?—A. As soon as he called that there was a fire in the reading-room, I ran into the door far enough to see the fire, I saw the place.

Q. Where was it?—A. Underneath the second desk from the door of the Commons side.

Q. Then what did you do?—A. I ran out through the door and called to Mr. Stewart who was at the entrance to the Serjeant-at-Arms door.

Q. That is the next door?—A. Yes. I called to him that there was a fire in the reading-room and I turned and ran back to the other end of the corridor next to the Senate side.

Q. Through the reading-room across to the Senate side?—A. Yes, and took the extinguisher off the hook and ran back and turned it on until the flames forced me out of the room.

Q. Where were the flames by that time—they had set fire to the desk I suppose?—A. I could not say that, but the papers were all burning around it.

Q. On the side of the wall?—A. Yes, it was blazing up the wall.

Q. When you turned on the fire extinguisher what effect had it on the fire?—A. It took the fire down on the side I had the extinguisher on.

Q. It seemed to work?—A. Yes.

Q. And did it throw a proper stream with considerable force?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you notice anything the matter with the extinguisher?—A. No, sir, nothing.

Q. Then the fire drove you back?—Yes.

Q. The fire was not on the floor?—A. No, sir, I do not think so—it seemed to be coming from the bottom shelf of the desk.

Q. How many of these shelves were there?—A. I think there were four.

Q. And the bottom shelf was how far from the floor?—A. About a foot from the floor.

Q. You stood there where you were until the fire forced you to retreat—did you drop the extinguisher then?—A. I backed out of the room with the extinguisher still on the fire and I did not drop it until half-way down the corridor where Mr. Stewart was standing—I dropped it there.

Q. Mr. Stewart is the door keeper at the serjeant-at-arms entrance?—A. Yes.

Q. And where did you go then?—A. Around the front corridor and back up to the Senate and took the hose off the stand in the Senate corridor and turned it on the fire in the reading room. I called to someone to turn the water on and it was done immediately and we directed the water on from the Senate side.

Q. The draught of it was mostly towards the Commons and you ran to the Senate side so as to be able to fight it?—A. Yes.

Q. You got into the reading room with the nozzle?—A. Yes. One of the constables held the swinging door open.

Q. Who was present just at that time on the Senate side—was Dr. Reid there?—A. Yes, he was—he had gone into his office a short while before that and he stepped up behind me and said: "I am here."

Q. You had spoken to somebody about him being there?—A. Yes.

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Q. What did he say?—A. I heard him passing the remark about the pictures or that some person ought to take the pictures down.

Q. And you kept the stream on through the open door?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there smoke coming out that direction?—A. Yes, but not once.

Q. But not much flame?—A. Not at first—not when I got to it first there.

Q. Who was assisting you?—A. Constable Miller, and Constable Knox was holding the door open.

Q. And you took turns in fighting the fire?—A. We were both on the hose until the smoke was so strong we could not stay and we took turns, one holding it while the other went to the window for air.

Q. But the fire got past you towards the Senate room?—A. No, sir—the blaze was through the door several times but I kept the water right on it.

Q. Did you see a messenger of the Senate in the reading room?—A. Yes, he came out shortly afterwards and helped us.

Q. How long were you there before the city brigade arrived?—A. I am sure half an hour perhaps longer.

Q. And then you, I suppose, worked together with them?—A. Yes, until they did not need us any more—they got their own hose in and they did not want us any longer.

Q. Was the pressure on the hose when you got it on—was there any pressure?—A. Yes, very good.

Q. And the extinguisher worked very satisfactorily until you could not use it any longer and the hose worked satisfactorily?—A. Yes.

Q. Do you know what the floor of that room was covered with?—A. No, sir, I could not say exactly what the floor was covered with.

Q. The blaze, when you saw it, could not have possibly come from downstairs, from below?—A. No, sir—I do not think so.

Q. And the only person you saw coming out of the reading-room after your attention was drawn to the fire was the member who you think is Mr. Glass?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see anybody going in then?—A. Yes, sir—the last one who went in was Mr. De Witt Foster, the ex-Member.

Q. When did he go in?—A. Not more than five minutes before the fire started.

Q. And did you see him coming out?—A. No, sir.

Q. Now if there is anything else you know in regard to the fire let us know it, or have you said all?—A. There was a lot more I could tell of what I did during the night, but nothing concerning the origin of the fire. After the firemen took it in charge I went to the Debates office and tried to get to the fire through the courtyard—that was right from the front entrance.

Q. But there was a witness here this morning, Mr. Spencer, who said he went in and started to pull the newspapers off this desk?—A. I did not see him.

Q. It was the extinguisher at the Senate side you got?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there an extinguisher on the Commons side?—A. I do not think so, but I could not say.

Q. It was in the reading-room next the Senate Chamber?—A. Yes.

Q. And the hose-stand of which you used the hose was that outside the reading-room or inside?—A. It was in the corridor about half-way down across the corridor—that is the corridor at the back of the Chamber.

Q. Straight in line with the reading-room?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

PAUL MILLER, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You were on duty the evening of the fire in what portion of the House?—
A. On the visitors' gallery door.

Q. About what time?—A. I went on at 7.30.

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Q. And continued on until the alarm? What time was that?—A. About seven minutes to nine.

Q. Do you know who it was gave the alarm?—A. No—some one shouted it in the Commons chamber.

Q. Did you hear that very distinctly?—A. I did hear the word “fire” very distinctly, but I saw the Speaker jump off the chair and all the members got up and I thought it was a fire.

Q. Did you run out to assist?—A. Yes.

Q. Were there many people in the gallery?—A. Very few.

Q. Who did you see when you ran to the reading-room?—A. Constable Moore and Constable Knox and quite a few other gentlemen there, but the only one I recognized was Dr. Reid, the Minister of Customs.

Q. Did you notice anybody closing the Senate doors?—A. Yes, after coming downstairs, I noticed some one closing the Senate door when I was crossing the main lobby—the gentleman locked them and I went to the reading-room and I was there in time to spread the hose and turn on the water.

Q. Are you the constable who helped Mr. Moore in taking turns at the nozzle?—A. Yes.

Q. And Constable Knox was there too?—A. Yes, holding the door open.

Q. Was the fire well advanced by that time?—A. When I first got there it was mostly smoke and the fire seemed mostly at the end of the Commons—I spread the hose from the Senate side and the fire seemed towards the Commons door.

Q. At the end of the little corridor that passes between the wall and the wooden partition?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see anybody using fire extinguishers?—A. No, sir.

Q. It was done before you came down, I suppose—what kind of pressure did you have from the hose?—A. A good pressure.

Q. How long did you stay there?—A. We were there half an hour or so before the firemen came—we let them in through the Speaker’s door—that is the Senate Speaker’s door.

Q. And they took charge and you assisted them?—A. After they took charge the smoke was practically drifted away—it was going the other way and the fire was practically burned out then.

Q. And it had passed from the reading room into the Commons corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. It was burning pretty briskly there?—A. Yes—of course we did not know how far it was going on the other side, but it was pretty well checked down on the Senate side.

Q. Did you continue with the hose?—A. The firemen came first and took our hose and it was not working very good on the Senate Chamber, and Inspector Parkinson said to let any firemen in and I stood on the door until I left.

Q. Did anybody else go and help you with the hose?—A. Only one man, Mr. Perkins, a messenger in the Senate, I think.

Q. Did you hear any explosion at the time of the fire?—A. No, sir.

Q. When you say it was pretty well burned out on the Senate side you mean in the reading-room?—A. Yes—it was pretty nearly getting out in the corridor on us, but we got it down and it went the other way towards the Commons side.

Q. Did it appear to be in more than one place?—A. No, sir, not that I could see in the reading-room.

Q. You say you could see very little when you went there first but as soon as you saw the fire down a little you located it at one place?—A. Yes. It had all got up and the roof was beginning to fall in at that time.

Q. You did not see it in any more than one place?—A. No, sir.

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By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Which corridor did you see the fire in?—A. The West.

Q. And which one?—A. The one running north and south.

Q. Which corridor did you go along, the East or West?—A. I came down from the gallery across by the lobby—I could just see up the corridor.

Q. That would be the East corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. Was that on fire when you came down?—A. Just a few flames running along, seemingly running on the oil on the floor.

Q. It had got into those wardrobes at that time?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you detect any odour of any kind apart from smoke?—A. No, sir, it was a very strong smoke.

Q. But you could not tell whether there was any chemicals mixed with it?—A. No, sir.

And futhermore witness deposeth not.

JAMES EDWARD KNOX, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a constable on the Dominion Police Force?—A. Yes.

Q. And on the night of the fire you were on duty at the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. In uniform?—A. No, sir, in plain clothes.

Q. Then you would have supervision over all?—A. Yes, I was all through the building—I was every place.

Q. That is the usual thing for one or more constables to be in plain clothes, in addition to those in uniform—A. Yes.

Q. Now when you first saw the fire, where were you, or when you first heard of it?—A. I was standing at the first floor at the elevator, at the Post Office Department of the House of Commons.

Q. And what did you do?—A. When I heard the shout of fire I ran to the reading-room.

Q. That is down the east corridor?—A. Yes, on the Commons side, to the reading-room.

Q. What did you see?—A. When I went to the door the first who appeared to me was Constable Moore with the fire extinguisher on the flames.

Q. Where was the fire?—A. The fire was on the low shelf on the second desk from the Commons side.

Q. On the lowest shelf?—A. Yes.

Q. The one next the floor?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see fire in any other part of the reading-room except in that place, when you went there?—A. No, sir.

Was there much of a blaze at the time?—A. Very little then—just about two papers on fire, when I witnessed it then.

Q. You saw him using the fire extinguisher?—A. Yes.

Q. Did the fire extinguisher have any effect either in increasing the flames or reducing them?—A. It reduced them but with the force of the fire extinguisher on the papers, it turned the papers up and the flames got hold of them and then it spread—it spread it all around. The stream of the fire extinguisher is only the size of your finger and the area of the fire was too wide for it, and therefore it caught on the top and took the whole desk up with it and the papers on the top took fire, and they spread to the next, and then to the papers on the wall, and then the papers on the wall went.

Q. Who kept the door open—was it a swing door?—A. I was inside the room with Constable Moore.

Q. Did you notice any draughts in the place?—A. Not to any extent at all.

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Q. The flames caught in the papers quickly and did they appear to run rapidly on the wall?—A. When it caught on the walls it went very rapidly then.

Q. Did you stay with Constable Moore?—A. Yes, until he dropped the fire extinguisher. It was the heat that forced us to retreat out of the reading-room into the Commons side.

Q. And he dropped the extinguisher and you went around to the Senate side and took the House on the Senate side?—A. Yes.

Q. You took the hose off the stand and turned on the water—or who turned on the water?—A. I think it was Constable Miller.

Q. Now, when the water was turned on, what did you notice? Was the water pressure good?—A. Yes, it was very good, because it nearly knocked me down myself—that is how I got wet, the force of the water.

Q. Holding the nozzle?—A. No, the nozzle was not through then—I had to hold the door open for them to put the hose through.

Q. Who did you notice there, if anybody, besides yourself and Constable Miller?—A. Hon. Dr. Reid and Mayor Martin of Montreal.

Q. And you went into the reading-room with the hose?—A. No, we were just standing at the opening of the door between the two doors.

Q. And you started playing water on the fire?—A. Yes—at this time there was no flame on the Senate side at all—it was all on the Commons side.

Q. How long did you remain there playing the hose?—A. About a quarter of an hour.

Q. And had the water any effect on the fire?—A. Yes, we had a good result, because if we were not there the fire would have spread—the fire came right to the door and the flames were warming the door up so I could hardly hold it any longer and the flames came right through and they had to retreat back with the hose.

Q. Did you see anybody you knew outside the constables and beside Dr. Reid and Mayor Martin?—A. There were one or two others but I could not say who they were.

Q. Were they people you had been in the habit of seeing around the House?—A. Yes, there was one other member there too.

Q. Would you know if he was the man examined this morning, Mr. Glass?—A. No, sir, I know Mr. Glass well.

Q. Do you know Mr. Foster?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see him there?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you see any one in the corridor on the Senate side?—A. No, there was no one when I left, Constable Moore said to go and get help to pull the hose back, and I left and at this time the smoke was coming out and they were clearing out the people at the front, and some refused to go, and I could get no help. I stayed there two minutes and got Constable Sleeman and said to come back and give us a hand with the hose on the Senate side—when we started to go back some one had locked the Senate door and we could not get back.

Q. And did you try to get around by any other way?—A. Yes, down by the basement, and came up by the Senate Speaker's, but all the corridors were filled—the further I went the worse the smoke got and I started to go back and I was pretty near being lost there because I could not get back with smoke and could not find the door I went through. I had to stand at one door two or three minutes to get breath.

Q. What time did the lights go out on the Senate side?—A. Eleven o'clock—that was the last time I was in the Senate.

Q. Did you make a statement that the lights went out at 10.30?—A. No, that was on the Commons side.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Whose voice did you hear giving the alarm of "fire"?—A. The first I heard was Constable Helmer.

Q. And you went immediately to the reading room?—A. Yes.

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Q. And when you got there the fire was in the first or second of these newspaper stands?—A. In the second on the Commons side.

Q. I was under the impression Mr. Glass said he was standing at the second and the fire broke out in the first?

Mr. WHITE, K.C.: No, I think Mr. Glass said he was standing at the second and the fire broke out behind him.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Mr. Glass said he was standing at the second desk and that the fire originated in the first desk coming from the House of Commons corridor—you were under the impression when you saw the fire first it was at the second desk?—A. Yes.

Q. These are double desks?—A. Yes.

Q. Mr. Glass evidently took it in as the one desk, it being the first desk of double size?—A. No, it was the second desk.

Q. Your recollection is, where you first saw the fire was the second desk and not at the first?—A. Yes, it would be impossible—where he was reading it would be right under him. He says it started at the first desk, and that would be at his back. Where I saw the fire, it would be right underneath where he would be.

Q. You are very clear when you first saw the fire it was at the second desk?—A. Yes.

Q. Mr. Glass says he stood at the second desk with his back towards the first desk and his face towards the Senate, and the fire occurred behind him.—A. There was no fire on the first desk when I entered the room.

Q. You are clear there was no fire at the first desk?—A. Quite clear.

Q. What fire you saw was under the second desk?—A. Yes.

Q. And that was the only one you saw in the reading room?—A. Yes.

Q. And it was from that fire that the fire spread?—A. Yes.

Q. I think you told Mr. White that these walls were just one mass of loose papers and that the fire jumped into them and it was then beyond your control?—A. Yes. I might say that this smoking in the reading room has been a regular occurrence, because I was through it often and saw members often and often smoking in this place.

Q. I understand it was absolutely contrary to rule?—A. Not in our case—our rules are that members can smoke any place in the building, but no other individuals except members.

And furthermore witness deposeseth not.

Constable C. E. HELMER, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are also a member of the Dominion police force?—A. Yes.

Q. And were on duty the night of the fire?—A. Yes, I went on duty at 7.30.

Q. Where were you stationed?—A. From 7.30 to 8.30 on the northwest corner of the Senate lobby, that would be outside the reading-room.

Q. But on the Senate side?—A. Yes.

Q. When was your attention first drawn to the fire?—A. To the best of my judgment I would say between 8.45 and 9 o'clock.

Q. By whom?—A. C. J. Stewart, chief door-keeper of the House of Commons.

Q. The gentleman examined this morning?—A. Yes.

Q. And he told you there was a fire in the reading room?—A. Yes.

Q. And what did you do then?—A. I ran back as fast as I could and saw the fire was in a pile of papers in the second reading stand in the bottom shelf.

Q. That is the second reading stand from the House of Commons side?—A. Yes.

Q. Just as described by the last witness?—A. Yes.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

Q. You saw the pile of papers burning there and who was in the room at that time?—A. Constables Knox and Moore were the only ones I noticed. Constable Moore was playing the Babcock on the flames.

Q. Did it appear to have any effect?—A. From an instantaneous glance, it seemed to work all right, but I could not say what effect it had on the flames.

Q. You were looking across the reading-room from the Senate side?—No, the Commons side.

Q. Then you were looking quite close to it?—A. At an angle of 45 degrees about. Constable Moore says he was standing between the second and third reading desks, playing the fire extinguisher.

Q. And it appeared to be working all right as far as you saw?—A. Yes. I ran up the east side lobby of the House of Commons and called Sergeant Carroll and told him there was a fire in the reading-room, and we went down as fast as possible, and saw the fire was gaining such proportions that the extinguisher was no use, and we retired to the Speaker's entrance, about fifty feet, and got the hose and turned it on but the fire got to such proportions we had to retire.

Q. That would be in the north corridor?—A. Yes, in the House of Commons, right alongside the Speaker's apartments.

Q. And the fire was then coming down the corridor?—A. At that time it was coming out of the top of the reading-room door in large flames.

Q. It had taken in the corridor?—A. I could hardly say, but it had got such proportions we could not face it and had to retire.

Q. And then you went to warn the people?—A. Yes, to the House of Commons and called fire.

Q. Did you hear any explosion?—A. None whatever.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

JOHN L. DEACON, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What is your position?—A. Curator of the Reading Room.

Q. You were not on duty the evening of the fire?—A. No.

Q. Who are your assistants?—A. Claire Hugg and S. S. Spencer.

Q. The two men examined here to-day?—A. Yes.

Q. Who should have been on duty that night at that time?—A. I should have been on—we changed off—Mr. Spencer was to take two days and I was to take two days. Mr. Spencer was on his right hour, as far as that is concerned.

Q. What is your method—have you anything to do in case of fire, any instructions from anybody in regard to fire appliances in case of fire?—A. No, sir.

Q. Not from the Sergeant-at-Arms or anybody else?—A. No.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You are the one in charge of the reading room?—A. Yes.

Q. What is your instruction in regard to waste paper?—A. It is put in a basket and carried away in the morning.

Q. Is that done regularly?—A. Oh, yes, every morning.

Q. On the night of this fire were there any waste-paper baskets lying around the reading room?—A. No, they were in Room 30, a little room off that.

Q. But your instructions are that no waste paper is allowed to be around the reading room and the waste is taken up every morning?—A. Yes, the baskets are emptied and I always pick up any that is noticed.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Who has authority over you?—A. Dr. Flint.

Q. That is the Clerk of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. Have you any instructions from your superior as to smoking in the reading room?—A. The last time I had instructions was when the late Speaker White was there—he told me to request the members not to smoke, and I only spoke to one man, and when I went in two or three days after to see the Speaker he asked me about that and said that the gentleman had told him. He told the Speaker that I had told him—he asked me who it was that I told him it was Deputy Speaker Bergeron—and that was the last instructions I got.

Q. The habit was, whether right or wrong, that members went in there and smoked?—A. Yes, and the reporters too.

Q. Did anybody else?—A. Well, any friends who went in with the members.

Q. You were not there when the fire started?—A. No, I left at 5.30.

Q. Have you been present during the examinations this morning?—A. No.

Q. It is said by some witnesses that this reading room was filled with papers, and the desks and everything made of pine?—A. There are four made of pine and I think the last two new ones were made of hardwood.

Q. And the partitions on which the files were hung?—A. They are made of pine.

Q. And the gallery of pine?—A. I think so.

Q. What was the floor covered with?—A. A composition of rubber—about half an inch thick.

Q. It seems to be said that this is particularly inflammable and reliable to combustion?—A. My impression was that it would not burn at all.

Q. Not the floor but the walls?—A. Oh yes, those were.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Was the floor shellacked lately?—A. Not to my knowledge, never oiled or shellacked.

Q. The architect said not long ago the floor had been varnished or shellacked?—A. Well, not that I know of—I think the library was shellacked.

Mr. WHITE, K.C.: I think he referred to the corridor.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

- CLAIRE S. HUGG, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are one of the assistant curators?—A. Yes.

Were you on duty the evening of the fire?—A. Until seven o'clock.

Q. Had you noticed any suspicious persons there?—A. No, hardly any person from 5.30 to 7 o'clock in the reading-room going through.

Q. There was nothing extraordinary that you noticed?—A. No.

Q. You left there at seven o'clock?—A. Yes.

Q. And you really know nothing about it?—A. Nothing whatever, except that. And furthermore witness deposeth not.

RÉNÉ SMITH, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Just you tell us what you know about this?—A. I am a page in the House of Commons and I was sent on a message for Mr. Elliott, the member, and was just going out the door and heard some person in the reading room shouting "fire," and I ran in and on the first shelf I started taking off the papers and pitching them back over, and the top got worse.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. The first desk?—A. Yes, right near the door.

Q. That is where you first saw the fire, on the first stand right near the door?—
A. Yes.

Q. And when you first saw it in what condition was it?—A. It had just started—it was in the middle of the first stand.

Q. How large would the fire be when you first saw it?—A. It was taking on the wall——

Q. Was it taking on the wall or on the papers on the stand?—A. It was taking on the wall.

Q. The others think it took on the papers on the shelf of the stand?—A. Yes.

Q. And where was it when you first saw it?—A. On the stand.

Q. On one of the shelves of the stand?—A. Yes.

Q. Are you sure it was on the first stand as you entered the reading room coming from the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. What did you do when you saw it?—A. I started to take off the papers from the shelf that were not burning, and to pitch them back, and the flames started to get pretty bad and I ran out in the lobby and ran out the front way.

Q. Did you see the constable going with the extinguisher?—A. When I went in there the constable had the extinguisher.

Q. And you say the fire was very small when you first saw it and then it reached over to the papers on the side of the wall?—A. Yes.

Q. And after that?—A. Then I say it got pretty bad and I ran out then.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Did you hear any explosion?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you detect any smell other than that of fire?—A. No, sir.

Q. Is the stand a long thing?—A. Yes.

Q. And extended from the door you came in at to along the Senate side?—A. No, the Senate is over there.

Q. But it went along the north?—A. Yes.

Q. Where was the constable with the extinguisher?—A. There at the second stand.

Q. The second shelf of that stand?—A. No, the next shelf of that stand.

Q. What do you mean by shelf?—A. The second table—there is the first table and the second.

Q. What was he doing at the second table?—A. He had the extinguisher on the first one.

Q. Playing on it?—A. Yes, trying to put it out.

Q. At the first table?—A. Yes.

Q. You did not stay there very long?—A. No, sir, I didn't.

Q. Any of the papers that you moved, were any of them on fire at all?—A. Not at all.

Q. Then how far were you from the fire?—A. About five feet.

Q. Then the constable was between you and the fire?—A. No, I was at his left side.

Q. And you say, though, the fire had reached the wall and was going up the wall?—A. Yes.

Q. Going up pretty quickly?—A. Yes, I think it did.

Q. Are you sure it did?—A. I am quite sure it did.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

THOMAS WENSLEY duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What position do you hold in the Civil Service?—A. Chief Engineer of the Parliament Buildings.

Q. Were you at the buildings at the night of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. What do your duties consist of?—A. I have to see that the place is properly heated and ventilated for which there are a number of fans—two fans about twenty feet above the skylight in the House of Commons and two fans down in the boiler house, one an exhaust and the other a blower, and also another exhaust immediately under the centre of the reading room—these were all in operation.

Q. Was there any connection or any draft from that exhaust immediately under the reading room from the reading room itself?—A. Yes, it would be drawn down and discharged into main chimney.

Q. You do not know anything about the construction of the building?—A. In what way?

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. There are a number of ventilators in that reading room?—A. A number of coils.

Q. Are they connected with the ventilating system?—A. No.

Q. A number of air gratings?—A. Only two. Do you mean the registers on the side of the walls?

Q. Yes, what are those?—A. The room there was formerly heated by them. That was the time when that room was a library.

Q. Was there any connection between your ventilator apparatus and the reading room?—A. There was one exhaust connected with the reading room situated immediately under the centre of the reading room.

Q. There is a grating there?—A. Two gratings in the floor.

Q. What is the effect—does the ventilator apparatus draw the air out?—A. Yes, sucks the air out of the chamber—that is out of the reading-room.

Q. Yes—is there anything that brings in a current of fresh air through the reading-room?—A. Only through the door.

Q. What effect would that have in the event of fire?—A. It would naturally draw it in towards the centre of the reading-room.

Q. Would it have the effect of accelerating the fire?—A. I do not think so—I do not think it would be strong enough for that.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Not speaking of the fire itself, but what effect would it have on the smoke?—A. I think it ought to retain it in the room.

Q. Mr. Ewart suggested the idea that the fans provided for the ventilation of the Commons Chamber might have the effect of drawing the fire out of the reading-room in the direction of the corridors?—A. I do not think that could possibly be—not to my mind. We have a pressure of air in the Chamber from above, but if any inward draft caused by the fans it would be down close to the floor. When that fire started I was twenty or thirty feet on top of the Commons Chamber at those fans and when I came down from those fans at about nine o'clock I heard a noise downstairs—I crossed the sky-light and came down to the second floor and there was no smoke there—I could go from one end to the other, but when I got to the ground floor I could not see my hand before my face.

Q. The smoke was coming from the reading-room?—A. Yes, and in trying to get across I ran into one of the marble columns and when in the corridor where we usually go to the boiler I could not go down at all the heat was so intense so I had to go over to the Senate.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

Q. Have you since the fire inspected the basement under the reading-room?—A. Yes—that is all right—intact.

Q. So the fire could not have come from below?—A. No. But the room occupied by the Hon. Mr. Burrell, the ceiling is slanting down but the other ceiling under the reading-room there is nothing wrong with it except damaged by water.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Where the corridors ran and the wardrobes for the members, is there a space between that roof above and the galleries?—A. That is a panel roof.

Q. What is between that panel roof and the floor above?—A. That is concrete.

Q. Is there an open space there?—A. No, none.

Q. My recollection is that the gallery slopes down?—A. Well, there is an open space under the gallery—that raises up.

Q. Well, there would be an open space?—A. Yes.

Q. Once the fire got into that what would happen?—A. It would burn up.

Q. There would be a great current of air?—A. Yes, there would be right around there. If the fire got in there our exhaust would draw from that as well.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. And there was no fire up where you were?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you get to the fire, or see the fire?—A. No, I could not—the corridor was so full of smoke I worked my way down to the boiler room.

Q. What are the walls of the reading room?—A. Brick—the outer wall is stone lined with brick in keeping with the rest of the building. Next to the Library is brick and the one next to the Commons is partly brick and partly stone, because it carried the ventilating towers.

Q. Do you know any reason why people might imagine they heard an explosion while the water was being poured on the fire?—A. I do not—I never heard any explosion—the only one I heard was when the roof and towers came down. I did not hear any explosion; there might have been but I do not know anything about it.

Q. Your part is all right now?—A. Yes, we are heating three parts of the building now.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

FREDERICK A. WILSON, duly sworn, deposed:—

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are electrician in charge of the Parliament Buildings?—A. I am in charge of the rewiring.

Q. You are employed by the Public Works Department?—A. Yes.

Q. And in any rewiring you had to do you had to go through nearly all the walls?—A. Yes.

Q. Have you anything different to say than what has been said by Mr. Ewart and the others in regard to the construction of the building?—A. I heard Mr. Ewart, and to my knowledge it is just similar to what Mr. Ewart said.

Q. You have nothing new to offer in that regard?—A. Nothing.

And your electric apparatus is pretty near all right?—A. It is still intact except in the burnt section. I have a plan of what we have done in the way of rewiring.

(Plan produced as Exhibit 6.)

Q. You were not there the night of the fire?—A. Yes, I reached there at half-past ten.

Q. You know nothing of its origin?—A. No.

By His Honour Judge MacTavish:

Q. What caused the lights to go out? I understand they went out at 9.30?—A. No, at a quarter to eleven—they all went out because of a short circuit from the main

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feeder feeding the new wing, and I put them on in ten minutes and they remained on until morning.

Q. Somebody said they went out at nine o'clock in the House of Commons?—A. I was not there; I know around the Commons and the Senate lobby they were burning there while I was there.

Q. If the lights had caused the fire would the lights have gone out instantly?—A. Yes, instantly.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. There are different circuits?—A. Yes, about forty-eight circuits.

Q. It would only effect the circuit where the fire was?—A. Yes.

Q. You know nothing of what took place until after your arrival?—A. That is all.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

EDGAR STANSFIELD duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. What is your occupation?—A. Chemist in the fuel-testing division of the Mines Branch.

Q. How long have you been engaged in that occupation?—A. Five years in Ottawa and was doing similar work for five years in Montreal for the Government.

Q. Are you a graduate of any university?—A. Of Manchester University.

Q. What degrees do you hold from there?—A. Master of Science.

Q. You have heard the evidence here to-day in regard to this fire which took place on Thursday night—in your opinion could that fire have originated from the use of chemicals placed in the reading-room?—A. I think it would have been possible.

Q. Would it not, if the fire had started from chemicals been more likely that the fire would have broken out in several places rather than just one place?—A. I suppose that would depend upon the amount of time that the man had to plant the material.

Q. Is it not a simple chemical process to place a solution on newspapers which when it dries out causes the paper to take fire?—A. It is quite simple.

Q. Will you show us that process?—A. Yes, sir.

(At this juncture Mr. Stansfield poured a small quantity of liquid upon a newspaper and in five minutes according to time taken the newspaper burst into a flame.)

The WITNESS: This, as you see, took about five minutes to inflame, but it might be arranged to take longer.

Q. My reason for asking this is, that we have received through the Dominion Police a report, whether correct or not, that a certain fire bug in the State of Ohio has made an admission that certain fires were caused by the use of a liquid which was placed on inflammable material and which in a short time caused a fire, and I find from this information that they tested in the Fire Marshall's office a bottle of material found in the fire bug's possession, who is now serving a term in the State prison—they tested it on various materials and the time varied from twenty to thirty minutes in which it remained dormant—this time would give a culprit ample time to escape—now, I want to know for my own information whether such a solution could be used and not easily detected, whether a man could go into the reading-room and put that solution on and walk out and in half an hour afterwards the fire would occur?—A. The difficulty in my mind with such a solution would be to make it take a longer time than a short time. But I think a man with a little ingenuity could plant a bomb so as to time with considerable accuracy.

Q. They tested various kinds of materials and the time was from twenty to thirty minutes?—A. Yes.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

Q. The bomb would necessarily have to explode?—A. Not necessarily—just get hot—no doubt you could arrange something to serve that purpose. I think for example I could arrange a solution that would take longer to evaporate than this one, but I have not had time—this one is a well-known solution.

Q. All these solutions would have more or less odour in drying up?—A. They would be apt to.

Q. Do you know of any absolutely odourless? Or would it be possible to have it absolutely odourless?—A. It would be difficult to get one absolutely odourless but it might be possible.

Mr. PRINGLE: I do not know whether in walking through this room I would detect that odour.

Mr. WHITE: I should say that you could, but if concealed in a bomb that might keep the smell in?

The WITNESS: In this particular solution it has to evaporate before anything would happen.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Are there any other means that could be used for the setting of fire apart from the bomb and a solution of this kind without the actual starting of fire—I mean preparations they could scatter about in the corridors and within a certain period of time cause fire?—A. I do not know anything offhand that could be scattered about—there are a number of organic liquids that do ignite immediately they come in contact with the air but the difficulty with these would be to arrange for them not to be exposed to the air until they are wanted to catch fire.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. I saw a case in the papers saying that some preparation used by housewives to keep down the dust, if it got into a corner it might cause combustion?—A. I do not know about that. I know oily rags are liable to go off spontaneously.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You heard the evidence this morning of Mr. Ewart, the architect, and you no doubt are familiar with those buildings—would that woodwork there covered with varnish from time to time be very inflammable?—A. I should think quite inflammable.

Q. Take that newspaper room as described, I suppose it would be an easy prey for the flames?—A. I should think so. The newspapers hanging vertically would be apt to burn very rapidly.

Q. More rapidly than laying down?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Instantaneously almost?—A. Yes.

Q. From your experiment here it seems to me that when the liquid has been on fire there is a stronger odour than before the fire—now, is there anything you can suggest after hearing the evidence to-day?—A. I think nothing further.

(The investigation was thereupon adjourned until Tuesday, February 15, at 10.30 a.m.)

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OTTAWA, February 15, 1916.

Pursuant to adjournment the Commission resumed its investigation at the City Hall Chamber, at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

R. A. PRINGLE, Esq., K.C., and His Honour Judge DUNCAN BYRON MACTAVISH,
Commissioners.

W. R. WHITE, K.C., *Counsel to the Commission.*

Mr. PRINGLE: Before commencing the examination of Mr. Northrup, M.P., I might say that we have a letter here from Mr. Stansfield and Mr. Carter, which we think might go on record. The letter is as follows:—

OTTAWA, February 14, 1916.

GENTLEMEN,—In accordance with the request of Mr. W. R. White, K.C., we give below our opinion with regard to the possibilities of incendiarism by means of chemicals.

Most inflammable materials may be exposed to air indefinitely without danger, and such means as heat, friction, or concussion are required to start combustion. It is well-known however, that certain substances, of which the best known examples are from oils and coals, will, under favourable circumstances, ignite spontaneously after an exposure to air which may vary from an hour to some months. There are known to chemists certain other substances, solids, liquids and gases, which, when exposed to air, ignite spontaneously with little or no delay.

There is no doubt in our minds that preparations made from chemicals of the last-named class could be used to start such a fire as that in the parliamentary reading-room. We have ourselves prepared liquids which when poured on to a newspaper ignited spontaneously after periods varying from a few minutes to more than an hour. The liquids we prepared had a distinct odour, but this decreased rapidly after they had been poured on to paper, and a few minutes later would easily have escaped notice in a well-ventilated room. Other liquids of this nature may be obtainable, which are free from odour.

We are also of the opinion that it would not be impossible to devise a small vessel, from which fire-causing material could be ejected after a more prolonged period.

We wish it to be clearly understood that the above suggestions are merely possible ways by which a fire might be started, and we ourselves have so far, during the course of the inquiry heard no evidence indicating that the fire was caused by chemical means.

We are,

Your obedient servants,

EDGAR STANSFIELD.
CARTER.

R. A. PRINGLE, Esq., K.C.,

JUDGE MACTAVISH,

Parliament Fire Commissioners, Ottawa.

(Letter produced as Exhibit No. 7.)

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

Mr. EDGAR STANSFIELD, recalled:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have already been sworn?—A. Yes.

Q. We would like to put this letter in the record as Exhibit No. 7, and I would ask you if that is your opinion and the opinion of the other parties signing it, as given there?—A. Yes.

Q. I would like to ask you a question, is ozone a product of oxygen produced by silent electric energy?—A. Yes.

Q. That is used in the ventilation and purifying of the air of the Parliament Buildings?—A. Yes.

Q. Did its use have any effect in rendering atmosphere in that building more combustible?—A. Ozone will support combustion more readily than ordinary oxygen, but the quantity would be so infinitely small there that it would have no appreciable effect.

Q. Still you think it would be a help?—A. Absolutely inappreciable.

Q. I find that when heated to 120 degrees Fahrenheit, it becomes oxygen and this gives a yellowish flame—would you say there was not sufficient there to cause these explosions?—A. Absolutely—certainly not—it would have no effect at all.

Q. It would in no way create an explosion if there were?—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

WILLIAM B. NORTHRUP, member of Parliament, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a member of the House of Commons?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you were in the reading-room on the evening of the fire?—A. I was.

Q. Do you remember about what time you were there?—A. I would say I left the reading-room within three minutes of the time the alarm sounded—three or four minutes before it sounded.

Q. Do you remember seeing any other persons in there at the time?—A. While I was standing at the desk, which was the first desk to the left as you entered the room, Mr. Glass of Middlesex came in and passed behind me and went to the end of that desk—he and I spoke for a moment and while we were speaking there came between us one of the messengers, who I remember had a file of papers in his hands, because he stepped back, so we could speak uninterruptedly.

Q. When saying a messenger, I presume you mean one of the curators in charge of the room?—A. Yes.

Q. Would you be kind enough to look at this plan which has been prepared and which will be identified as Exhibit 8—these are intended to represent the reading-desks and these rooms here are the rooms of the members alongside there?—A. Yes—here is Mr. White's room and here is Mr. Burrell's.

Q. When you say you came in, how did you come in?—A. Through the Commons side.

Q. And when you speak of the first desk that you were standing at, which one is it on the plan?—A. The desk marked "A"—I stood towards the Commons corridor, and was reading first the *Belleville Intelligencer* and then the *Belleville Ontario*. I had read the *Intelligencer* and I went to read the *Ontario*, to read an article about the blowing up of a barracks in Belleville—

Q. And you were standing on the side next to the entrance?—A. Yes.

Q. That is at the desk marked "A" on Exhibit 8?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see anybody else there?—A. Mr. Glass came in—I first saw him when he was passing behind me, and he stood at the library end of the same desk—we were reading at the opposite ends, with the curator perhaps half-way between us. Then there was a lady probably between the second and third desks there, or she might have been between the third and fourth.

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Q. But somewhere towards the middle of the room?—A. Yes.

Q. Do you know who she was?—A. No, I do not—I think she was dressed in purple, to my recollection.

Q. But when you entered the door did you notice a constable at the door?—A. I would not like to swear I did, but I think I did. My impression is that I did.

Q. When you left the reading-room where did you go?—A. I walked straight along the corridor that leads past the Speaker—straight out the reading-room down the corridor, at the end of which was Mr. Stanfield's room. My wardrobe is halfway between the reading-room and the corridor that led past Room 16—I stopped at the wardrobe and put on my overcoat and rubbers and walked straight out to the corridor and the lobby that faced Room 16, and I believe without seeing anybody, walked through to the post office, on my way home, until I reached the door that leads to the post office door at the main entrance. I did not meet anybody or did not speak to anybody.

Q. There was no delay?—A. I did not delay a second. When I reached the doors that led from the post office rotunda to the main corridors, I noticed a little altercation between the door-keeper at the corridor that leads to the reading-room and some tall young man who wanted to go in—a man dressed in a plaid or check suit—he evidently wanted to go down that corridor, and I looked to see how it would work out, but only a few seconds, and my impression is he went on down the corridor towards the reading-room.

Q. Do you know who he was?—A. I never saw him before—I only saw his back and have no idea who he was. His overcoat was a grey check, and of a rather striking colour.

Q. Had he the appearance of a respectable man?—A. Oh, yes.

Q. Then how long was it after that before you heard the alarm?—A. I do not think I stayed at that door more than a few seconds, and started for the main entrance, and was six or eight feet off that when the alarm sounded, and to the policeman there I said: "The House is rising early this evening," for on hearing the first gong I thought it was the closing-bell, but I soon found out differently. I thought it was the bell to notify us that the House was closed.

Q. Did you go back?—A. Not from the main entrance—the excitement commenced then.

Q. When in the reading-room were you smoking?—A. No, sir, I was not. As a matter of fact, the Hon. Martin Burrell and I came out of the House of Commons Chamber together, and walked over to the reading-room, he going to his room and I to the desk, and I did not stop walking from the time of leaving the Chamber to the reading-room, and I certainly was not smoking in the Chamber, and had not lighted a cigar after leaving. When I was rounding the corridor passing Room 16, going to the reading-room, I met Mr. Stanfield and Hon. Mr. Rogers there and I spoke to one of them and he replied—I just mention that to fix the time, as they might know the time they reached their rooms. I do not think I would be in the reading-room five minutes.

Q. What is your idea about the time the fire started?—A. I heard the clock strike nine, and my impression is that the clock struck nine two or three minutes after the alarm sounded, but it is possible it rung outside before—it may have been ten minutes later.

Q. Did you see anybody else smoking in the room?—A. I could not say that I did—I only saw those I mentioned in the room, and while I stood at the desk Hon. Mr. White and Joseph Downey of Orillia entered the room by the same door that I did and I spoke to them for a moment and they passed on to Mr. White's room—I hadn't any reason to think they were smoking.

Q. The only question is, did you notice anybody smoking?—A. I cannot say that I did.

Q. And when you left there was no sign of fire?—A. I did not see any.

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By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I do not know that there is anything else. Mr. Glass' statement is that he was standing at the second desk from the end of the room next to the Commons Chamber. Then where the fire originated, he was asked; and he said:—

“At the first desk in the reading room at the rear of me.

“Q. You were facing the east?—A. Yes.

“Q. And the fire originated at the first desk?—A. Yes.

“Q. Had anybody been at that desk, the first desk, during the time you were in the reading room?—A. When I went in there Mr. Northrup was at the front of that desk—those desks have a double front—and he was at the front of the first desk facing the Senate Chamber.

“Q. That would be the west side of the desk?—A. Yes.

“And very close to the entrance to the Commons corridor?—A. Yes, and he was reading the second or third file from that corner.”

Q. He says the fire originated at that desk—there is a difference of opinion—did he himself stand there at any time?—A. I do not remember seeing him at the second desk—I know he stood at the first—perhaps the curator would remember if he moved away. Where the lady was I would perhaps notice, but I have no recollection of seeing him except at the first desk. I was at the end towards Mr. Burrill's room and he was at the other end near the Senate.

Q. That would be the north end?—A. It would be at the end towards the Library.

Q. And you were at the opposite end of that same desk at the entry?—A. Yes—as he says, it is a double desk and if a fire as he says it would be at the side I was on.

Q. However, as far as you are concerned, you were not smoking?—A. I was not. I had just come from the Chamber and I was not smoking in the Chamber. I know I was not, and I just mention that as corroborating evidence, that Mr. Burrill and I walked down from the Chamber together there.

And further witness deposeth not.

Madame ALPHONSE VERVILLE, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are the wife of Mr. Alphonse Verville the member for Maisonneuve?—A. Yes.

Q. You were in the reading-room of the House of Commons when the fire started?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Could you tell me at what desk you were standing?—A. I was at a desk about in the middle of the room.

Q. The third or fourth desk?—A. I think the fourth. There was a gentleman at the first desk reading, when I went in.

Q. Do you know who he was?—A. No. I did not see the gentleman's face at first, he had his back turned.

Q. Do you know Mr. Northrup?—A. Yes, it was not he, his hair was darker than Mr. Northrup's—I did not see his face.

Q. He was standing at that desk?—A. Yes.

Q. Far down?—A. Just about the end.

Q. Have you any idea or impression whether he was a member or some person you were in the habit of seeing around there?—A. No—of course I did not see his face and did not pay any attention.

Q. And the fire started where?—A. When I saw it it was on the wall.

Q. Going up the wall?—A. Yes.

Q. And amongst the papers which would be hanging on the partition next to that desk as you went in?—A. Yes—just about half up the wall—not all the wall.

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Q. Was this same gentleman there at the time of the fire?—A. No, there was nobody in the room when I left.

Q. Did you see the policemen come in?—A. Yes, I saw them go up and down—I followed the policeman and it was then I saw the first fire, and I got right out.

Q. How did you go out?—A. The Commons side.

Q. Then the fire must have been near the door?—A. Yes.

Q. Then you passed very close to the fire?—A. Yes, very close to it.

Q. Did you see anybody else there that evening except that gentleman?—A. Just that one gentleman.

Q. You gave a statement to some reporters, shortly after the fire?—A. The same evening.

Q. And in that I notice in the *Citizen* of February 4:—

“I was reading a paper when I noticed the policeman rushing in with a fire extinguisher.”

A. Yes, he came in a couple of times before he attracted my attention, and then I knew there was a fire.

Q. And in an instant the reading-room was a mass of flame?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you run any risk running out the door?—A. Not very much, only the flame was going near it.

Q. I think in one report that I saw, it was said that you saw some suspicious stranger around there—is that right?—A. Well no, that man I mentioned to you was the only man I saw.

Q. And he was just reading at the desk?—A. Yes, just as though he was reading.

Q. And there was nothing in the statement that I think I saw that there was a difference of opinion as to what this man wore, as to whether a hat or a cap?—A. Oh, that was another man we saw outside.

Q. Where?—A. In front of the buildings outside.

Q. Did you see anybody in the reading-room but the one gentleman reading at the first desk?—A. No.

Q. And that was not Mr. Northrup?—A. No, he seemed to have darker hair than Mr. Northrup.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You do not remember seeing Mr. Northrup there at all?—A. No, sir.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Did you see anybody smoking there?—A. No, sir, I did not.

Q. Is there anything else, Mrs. Verville, which you could tell us which would add to our information?—A. No, I do not think so; the only thing was seeing this gentleman and I did not pay attention whether he was reading there or just standing there.

Q. Here are the first and second desks, marked A and B, would you say in which desk the fire was?—A. When I saw it first it was on the partition here where the newspapers were hanging.

Q. Was it a French paper or an English paper you were reading?—A. A French paper.

Q. And where would that be?—A. At the fourth desk.

Q. Is there anything else that you wish to say to the Commission?—A. No, because I do not know anything else.

Q. You got out as quickly as you could?—A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you went down that corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. When you got out to the post office corridor did you look back?—A. No, I went down and on my way down met two gentlemen and I said: “There is a fire in the reading-room,” and they walked towards the reading-room and came back again.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

WILLIAM F. NICKLE, M.P., sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a member of the Dominion Parliament?—A. Yes.

Q. And I believe you were in or near the reading-room the night of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you in the reading-room that night?—A. Yes.

Q. What time?—A. Between half-past eight and nine. I went from the main building through the reading room to the library—I stopped to look at the New York papers on the desk, just west of the corridor from the library to the reading-room, and while I was there Dr. Reid and Mr. Downey passed and passed a few casual remarks, and they went apparently to Dr. Reid's room. I went to the library to look up some "Hansard" and then I spoke to Mr. MacCormac and Mr. Thornton, I wanted the "War Lord" by Mr. Gardiner, and I spoke a word or two with Mr. MacCormac, one of the attendants, and Mr. Thornton the member for Durham, when my attention was attracted by a remark of the man behind me: "Look at the smoke," and I turned and saw the smoke curling into the library. Just then the door between the library and the alley leading to the reading-room came sharply to, and I went to the alley door and the attendant opened the door, and I walked as far as the reading-room with my handkerchief over my eyes. In the alley-way there was no smoke of consequence, but in the reading-room it was almost a fog—I found it impossible to go through and I returned and the attendant opened the iron door and I was permitted to leave the library by the side door. When I got outside, I noticed one of Madame Sevigny's guests at one of the windows of her apartment, and she was smothering, and I could see the smoke coming out over her head. I was in the library about ten minutes before my attention was attracted to the smoke coming in. There was no smoke in the alley-way of any consequence. What occurred after that had no relation to the fire.

Q. You tried to get past the reading-room and you went into the alley-way to see to what extent the fire had reached?—A. With the idea of giving a warning, if necessary.

Q. Was there any fire apparatus working then?—A. Not in that part of the building, I am not in a position to say as to the other.

Q. You would not know if any person was working at the Commons entrance to the reading-room?—A. The smoke was too dense to see.

Q. The lady at the window was afterwards rescued by the firemen?—A. Yes, she jumped into the firemen's net after they reached there.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

What is your view in regard to that iron door—I suppose that saved the library?—A. I cannot express an opinion as to that. All I know is that the attendant opened it for me to go out and on my return it was opened by the same man.

Q. At any rate, no fire got into the library through that door?—A. None while I was there.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. During the period you were in the reading-room you noticed only Dr. Reid and Mr. Downey? Was there anybody at the desks?—A. Not that I noticed—the conditions were absolutely normal.

Q. Did you notice Mr. Northrup?—A. From what he said this morning, I was there before he came in.

Q. And left before he came in?—A. I would so assume.

Q. Anyway, you were not smoking?—A. I do not smoke. The conditions were absolutely normal when I was in the reading-room.

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Q. Have you any opinion to express as to the inflammable character of the fittings in the reading-room?—A. I know that wood varnished will burn if it gets started.

Q. We know anything will burn under certain conditions, but as to its rapidity?—A. I think if a fire got started there at all it would burn with great rapidity.

Q. Under normal conditions?—A. Yes, that prevail in the reading-room.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

ARTHUR DE WITT FOSTER, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Where do you reside?—A. At Kentville, N.S.

Q. You were in the House of Commons reading-room the time the fire started or shortly before?—A. Shortly before, I would think.

Q. About what time were you there?—A. It would be somewhere between 8.30 and perhaps a quarter to nine or nine o'clock.

Q. While in there, did you notice any person there?—A. I passed through the reading-room very quickly to the Senate side to look at the Halifax papers, and I do not remember seeing any one although there may have been some there—I have not a clear recollection of seeing any one in there.

Q. Were you smoking?—A. No sir.

Q. Then your idea was you did not see any one in the reading-room?—A. I do not think so—I have not a very clear recollection that I did.

Q. When you left the reading-room where did you go?—A. To Room 200 on the top floor.

Q. In the new wing?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were there when the alarm of fire took place?—A. I did not hear the alarm. I was in my room, 200, just long enough to put on my coat and rubbers and went downstairs by the elevator, and went to look for the Halifax papers again, thinking they had been in the Commons with some members and that they would have been brought back to the reading-room and before I left the building I started to go into the reading-room again to see those papers, and when about 10 feet from the swinging doors of the reading-room the flames broke out, the full size of the doorway, and pieces of burning paper were coming through, and the hot air, and ignited and caught the lockers next to the room, almost instantly.

Q. The fire then spread rapidly?—A. Very. I stepped into the corner of the Chamber through the corner door and gave the alarm of fire and then ran out into the post office lobby and back to the other corridor by room 16 into the telephone booth to telephone to room 203, where I thought that Mr. Hart and McLean and McCoy were. I could not get them on the telephone. I perhaps was at the 'phone a very short time, and then I went downstairs thinking the alarm had not been given to those in the basement.

Q. That would be the stairway near the elevator?—A. Yes. I was down there and shouted "fire," and someone said, "everyone is out," and I came up there almost immediately. I went around to go back and the lockers were on fire and the corridors full of smoke by room 16.

Q. The fire had come around by the other side of the building?—A. Yes, past the Speaker's door.

Q. You managed to get out through that corridor?—A. I went out into the post office lobby by 16.

Q. You came through that corridor—did you say the lockers were on fire?—A. Yes, sir. I do not remember that all the lockers were on fire between where I came upstairs to around the post office, but all around the corridor in front of the Speaker's doorway.

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Q. There would be a part there on the side of the corridors where there were no lockers?—A. I do not remember about that.

Q. Was there anything else which you can tell us which might be valuable in this inquiry?—A. No, sir, I do not think so.

Q. You got out of the building, anyway, I suppose, and went about your business and stayed around there until the fire was over?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Room 200 is the Nova Scotia members' room?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Mr. H. F. GADSBY, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a newspaper man?—A. Yes.

Q. On what paper?—A. I have a number of papers.

Q. You are in the *Toronto Saturday Night*?—A. Yes.

Q. There was an article which appeared in the *Saturday Night*, which contains a reference like this:—

“It is now recalled that a German painter on a job on the Parliament Buildings some months ago had a fight with an English painter over the remark that the Union Jack will not fly over these buildings much longer.”

A. Yes.

Q. What authority did you have for that?—A. That information was given me by a man working on the building—I think a man named Anderson. The conversation was in the Victoria Chambers when looking at the fire.

Q. You were there when the fire broke out?—A. I was in the press-room.

Q. And the press-room is in the western part of the post-office corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. The extreme West wing, and you really know nothing personally as to what took place at the breaking-out of the fire?—A. Oh, no, I have not any knowledge as to that, I only noticed what happened in the press-room.

Q. Then beyond the fact that some person whom you did not know made that statement in the crowd, while looking at the fire?—A. The name was Anderson, I think. I could get it easily if you want it?

Q. I wish you would—I have read this very interesting article of yours in which you say there were dozens of Dominion police patrolling the halls and sentinelling the entrances, but there was no daily round of inspection?—A. Not that I saw.

Q. But we will know better as to that when we get the proper officials?—A. Yes.

Q. You say that there was slackness everywhere, and on top of that the accumulated dust of half a century, which was both inflammable and explosive—have they ever cleaned out these corridors?—Anybody who went to the reading-room would know that it smelt dust to the last degree—I imagine they had house-cleaning, but never removed the old files of papers or dusted them.

Q. You say “In the course of fifty years a parliament building forms easy-going habits, and there is nobody in particular to blame for feeling safe and comfortable—so when the firemen reached the Hill, they found several of the hydrants frozen and the first gush of water blew them clean out of the ground?”—A. My informant for that is also the gentleman who told me about the other thing—I think he was a plumber.

Q. You do not know, of course, of your own knowledge, whether it is correct or not?—A. No.

Q. I may say we have Chief Graham here and he will tell us—but I am informed that your plumber's story is not correct?—A. Quite likely—everything was written in a hurry that night and I had no time to verify the statement made.

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. You think the gentleman who spoke to you was a plumber?—A. Yes.

Q. And that was the same man?—A. Yes—I think his name was Anderson, but I can find out who he was and will let you know.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

ARTHUR HANNAY, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. You are a reporter?—A. Yes, Mr. White.

Q. In connection with the Hansard?—A. No, newspapers—the *Ottawa Free Press* and many outside papers.

Q. It is said that you are responsible for a report which says that the extinguishers were charged with some inflammable matter which spread the fire when it was applied?—A. As far as I was concerned, I was not present when the fire broke out. I was at the Chateau Laurier and I heard a statement to that effect, or possibly not as definitely as that.

Q. That is practically my recollection of the statement?—A. Does it not say “possibly”?

Q. No, it conveyed the impression to any one reading it that it was within the knowledge of the one who furnished the report?—A. I think I said there was a possibility that that was the case, because a policeman said when the fire extinguisher was applied to the blazing papers, that it did not have the effect of extinguishing the blaze, as was expected.

Q. What witness furnished you with that?—A. I am not certain as to that but I think Mr. Charles Stewart, the door-keeper of the House of Commons. I had a conversation with him—

Q. It is important that you should recollect if you can?—A. Certainly.

Q. Mr. Stewart has been examined and does not give that impression at all?—A. Does he not.

Q. Mr. Stewart's evidence, and in fact the evidence of all the witnesses, who used the extinguisher said it did have an effect in one way, but in another way it blew the burning papers that were against the wall and separated them, and made the flame worse?—A. I heard that question discussed by a group of people—Mr. Stewart was there—he was explaining how he saw the fire early and had given the alarm and my recollection of his conversation was that the extinguisher was applied to the fire and instead of the fire dying down it continued and increased.

Q. Then it was an expression of opinion or a statement of facts on the part of Stewart, or whoever it was who made the statement?—A. My recollection is that it was a statement of fact; I may be wrong however.

Q. However, you have no foundation yourself—you have no knowledge yourself of it—you say some person, and you are not sure whether it was Mr. Stewart who said that, and on that you based your statement?—A. Precisely.

Q. Did it strike you it would be a very difficult proposition for any person, with about 80 or 90 extinguishers of that kind through the building, to load them up with a material of that kind?—A. No sir it did not—I think it could have been done. You would not have to change the load—you could bring in one extinguisher charged and take another one way—that is, provided such a thing was done.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

GEORGE SIMPSON, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a Hansard reporter?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were present in the vicinity of the reading-room the night the fire occurred?—A. Not in the vicinity of the reading-room—I was in our office just at the back of the main entrance.

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Q. Your office is separated from the main entrance by that glass partition?—A. Yes.

Q. You were in the office?—A. If I might just tell what happened as I saw it—we have an electrical clock in our office, which marks off the ten-minute periods for each member of the Staff—that is, it marks the time each member goes on the floor—my time was 8.55; my bell rang automatically at 8.55 and at that moment I started into the Chamber, going through the door just on the east side of the east lobby—I walked through that to the door of the Chamber where the Sergeant-at-Arms sits. At that time there was no sign of any fire or smell of fire in that corridor. I had been on the floor of the House taking notes of the member who was speaking, for approximately three or three and a half minutes, when Mr. Stewart burst open the door and shouted that there was a fire in the reading-room. Just at his left was some other gentleman whom I cannot identify—there was somebody at his heels almost—they almost came in together.

Q. Then did you go out of the entrance of the Sergeant-at-Arms?—A. No, sir—when the alarm was given I waited to see what the Speaker would do, and when I saw him and the others moving, I got up and there was a general movement towards the door of the Speaker's entrance. I walked forward along as everybody did—there was no disorder, although everybody moved quickly, and I went out of the corridor opposite Room 16 to the post-office lobby, and from there I went quickly to the Senate entrance of our room to give the alarm to my confreres in the office.

Q. When you passed that eastern corridor, did you see the flame or smoke?—A. There was just this, when I heard the alarm given I turned suddenly and I saw smoke, and either flame or the reflection of flame at the northeast corner of the Commons Chamber, at the door, and I saw it as the door was opened at the Sergeant-at-Arms seat, at that centre door—I saw smoke and either flame or the reflection of flame.

Q. But when you went from the post office lobby to the Senate to warn your confreres did you see flame and smoke in the eastern corridor?—A. Yes, sir, there was a flame coming rapidly forward in the easterly corridor.

Q. Coming along these lockers?—A. Well, I did not take time to notice the details—I saw flames and smoke in there.

Q. Then you fix the alarm of fire, as nearly as possible, at 8.58?—A. Approximately that.

Q. Is there anything else you can tell us?—A. There is just one point: I saw a statement attributed to some one that the firemen did not get there for half an hour after the fire started—well, I went into our room and stayed around there for five minutes, about the entrance, while the policemen were starting the hose there. Then I was down in the vestibule and in two or three minutes some Dominion policemen got active in excluding the crowd—I went out then and remained for a couple of minutes and started down to the front gate and as I walked down I saw the firemen coming in the eastern entrance.

Q. That would be a matter of a few minutes after seeing the fire?—A. A matter of eight or nine minutes possibly.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

FRANK GLASS, M.P., recalled.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. There has been some little question as to where you saw the fire—since you were here last we have prepared a plan showing the position of those desks—this corridor here on the plan would be the corridor by which you went in?—A. Yes.

Q. And where would you be standing?—A. At the left-hand corner of desk B.

Q. That would be the northwest corner of desk B?—A. Yes.

6-7 GEORGE V, A. 1916

Q. Were you facing towards the Senate or towards the door where you came in?
—A. Towards the Library door. I was facing the third desk.

Q. Then you would be at the northwest corner of desk B facing the Senate?—
A. Yes.

Q. That is, you yourself were facing the Senate?—A. Yes, and I did not alter that position since going into the room.

Q. Which desk did the fire originate in?—A. Almost in the centre of this desk A—almost in the middle of it.

Q. Well now, there may be some different understandings as to the desks—these desks are double desks?—A. Yes.

Q. So that one person might say that this was desk 2 on this side, counting the other side as desk 1?—A. Exactly, paradoxically, it may be.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Mr. Northrup says that Mr. Glass stood at the end of desk A, towards the northwest corner, when you came in and that that is where he spoke to you. Now I understand you to say you did not stand at desk A but at desk B?—A. I came in from the Commons and turned to my left, and Mr. Northrup was at the second file on the extreme right of desk A, and as I passed him I spoke to him at the rear, and he turned around to see who I was, and he spoke, and I passed from the third file, from the end of desk A, and casually looked; I did not stop because the London papers were not there, and I passed immediately to desk B and had not left that desk while in the room, and did not lift my head until I saw Sir Thomas White.

Q. Then you agree with Mr. White you did stop there and then went to desk B?—A. Yes.

Q. Was anybody smoking in the room?—A. I did not notice. I was not smoking myself and I did not notice whether Mr. Northrup was or not.

Q. You are a smoker?—Yes, but the circumstances of the evening are particularly impressed upon me. I took my wife to the theatre and left her there at five minutes to eight, and lighted a cigar and smoked up to the House and went into room 16 and finished it, and then went into the House of Commons and sat there for five minutes.

Q. The fire started about 8.52?—A. Yes. I finished my cigar and read my correspondence in room 16, and the London papers of the night before, which I had received, and went into the House from there, and then I returned from there to go to the reading-room, just as Mr. Loggie got up to speak.

Q. You nor Mr. Northrup were not smoking and you saw nobody else smoking?—
A. No. I saw nobody in the room except Sir Thomas White, although the door opened and shut and people might have passed in and out.

Q. You came in to the reading-room and turned to the left to desk A, and as you turned Mr. Northrup was reading a paper and you passed him and hesitated, to see if the London papers were on file, and then left and went to desk B—when you came in you did not see Mr. Northrup smoking?—A. No.

Q. And you were not smoking yourself?—A. No.

Q. Nor did you see anybody else smoking?—A. No.

Q. At the time you entered was there any evidence of fire at that desk?—A. Not the slightest.

Q. And you remained at desk B until your attention was attracted by the heat of the fire which would be immediately back of you?—A. Yes.

Q. And you turned and looked and saw those papers on fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see Mr. Stanfield the other day give a demonstration of a fire set with a liquid?—A. I was not here that afternoon.

Q. I would like you to see that, to see if that fire resembles the rapid fire that this preparation makes. Some time when convenient Mr. Stansfield will show you that—

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I do not know whether it is possible to distinguish it from any other fire, but you might see it.

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. Did you notice any odor of any kind in the reading room while you were reading there?—A. Not the slightest—I did not detect the fire by the smell of smoke—it was by the heat first.

Q. But you did not detect it even by smoke?—A. I saw the smoke before I really smelt it.

Q. But you did not smell any other odor in the air?—A. None whatever.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.

Q. According to Mr. Carter's statement there might not have been an odor at all?

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. That is the statement that has just been put in now.

Mr. PRINGLE: It says there might not be any that could be detected—but at any rate, you were not smoking and you saw no one smoking, and a few minutes after you were there this flame broke out?

The WITNESS: Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. How long had you been there?—A. From seven to ten minutes—just the time that it took to read a few paragraphs—I spent all my time reading there, and I know pretty well how long I was there by what I read.

Q. It would not be impossible for a person to go in at such close proximity to you and set fire there?—A. Any person might go past into the Commons corridor. They did not pass in front of me. Several people came to this desk and retired—that is I heard the movements of people, but I did not see anybody.

Q. That would be quite close to where the fire was?—A. I am satisfied there would be no one between these two desks or I would have observed them. If the Commission would permit me, I would like to make a statement in view of the contradiction of evidence—I noticed a difference of opinion as to where the fire started, but I absolutely know just where it was, and if fifty or a hundred swore differently it would not change the evidence I have given. Mr. Stewart, one of the caretakers, was in there almost after the policeman and was the first to commence pulling the papers from under the desk and from the wall between the first and second desks, and he further confirmed the statement I made that Spencer was on the outside of the same desk pulling the papers away from that—I rushed to the door and announced the fire and the constable came in promptly and looked at the fire. I asked him where the extinguisher was and the hose and the alarm, and instead of waiting and getting them he rushed down the corridor to give the alarm—that was a fatal loss of time—if he knew where the extinguisher was and applied it at the time it would have lessened the danger. It was said that Mr. Glass stated that he could extinguish the fire with his coat—I did not say that, I said if accessible it could be extinguished with a coat or a blanket, but it was not. This other thought occurred to me, the moment I might disturb that file it would spread over with increasing rapidity. I have thought it over and I would not do differently in the circumstances—the proper thing was to call the officer. He came in and was evidently rattled and did not do what a man should do who knew his duty, and I am not surprised that he is mixed in his evidence as to where the fire started. When the appliance was played on that desk there was not the slightest touch of fire on the second desk—it was after the chemical apparatus started working that I noticed it burst into flame and spread. There was not the slightest fire on the second desk at that time.

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Q. I would like you to have seen that fire started by the chemicals—it started as you describe, it rushed across the paper—did this seem to spread fast when you saw it?—A. Not until the papers became distributed. If I had pulled them out and distributed them and the fire had spread, I would have been to blame, and I thought what was best to do was what I did, to call the officer at once.

Q. Is there anything else you wish to state?—A. I felt that the press reports perhaps spoke too fast, but the only report that has seemed to give my statement accurately was in the *Citizen*—I did not say the fire originated behind the desk, I said behind me. About this evidence as to the position of the fire, it would not make a particle of difference to me whether it was the first or second desk—the fact is it was at the first, and the evidence of the page and of Mr. Stewart would corroborate me, and if 100 policemen swore differently it would not make any difference to me.

Q. Certainly the page boy swore strongly in accordance with your statement, but it would not make much difference anyway—it was just as to whether there was any smoking?—A. I appreciate that, only where there is a conflict of evidence it discredits the evidence to some extent.

Mr. WHITE, K.C.: Not unless it is material.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. There were parties passing in and out, but you did not pay particular attention to them?—A. Yes.

Q. And you are sure as to this that during the few minutes you were there there was no one at Desks A and B except you and Mr. Northrup, and he has spoken for himself and you, in speaking for yourself you say you were not smoking?—A. No, sir, I was not.

Q. And there was nobody else at those desks that you saw?—A. No, sir.

Q. You do not remember seeing Madame Verville there?—A. I looked to see if there was any person there—I looked for the caretaker.

Q. She was at the fourth desk?—A. I did not see her.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The desks were high?—A. Yes.

Q. You might see over the next desk but to look over the third and the fourth you could not see clearly?—A. Yes.

Q. You saw the smoke coming up, and did you see the flames?—A. Yes—I felt the heat and turned and practically smelt the smoke and saw the flames at once—I had to stoop to see the blaze—it was on the lower shelf, and I had to stoop down to see it.

Q. It was only a few inches between the lower shelf and the one next to it?—A. Six or eight inches.

Q. You say it was in some distance on that shelf?—A. Pretty well into the centre. And furthermore witness deposeth not.

JOHN CARLETON, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You were caretaker of the Parliament Buildings?—A. My position was in the Senate, housekeeper and superintendent of messenger service.

Q. You were there the night of the fire?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. You heard some pump going—what was that?—A. I went upstairs with the night electrician of the Senate—I wanted to show him what I wanted done, and during the time I was explaining I heard the pump start—that is the pump that starts when the alarm is given.

Q. What kind of pump is it?—A. A pump in the engine room and it makes a noise in the hydrant—there are two or three hydrants in each floor and when the

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alarm goes it makes a noise in the hydrants, and I said: "There is a fire and I am going to go and see where," and when I ran towards the House of Commons I went down to the next flat and they were putting on the hose at the House of Commons reading-room door.

Q. On the Senate side?—A. Yes—that was the first water thrown.

Q. You knew a constable there?—A. Yes, there was a couple of them, and one of my chaps went to their assistance to put on the hose.

Q. And before you got to the fire the water pressure was on?—A. Yes. The water pressure was good when the hose was opened up, but it was not more than five to six minutes from the alarm to when the water was on and the House of Commons reading-room seemed in one cloud, and in two minutes after there were volumes of smoke through the broken glass of the door that no one could withstand.

Q. You did not hear any explosions?—A. Not then.

Or explosions subsequently?—A. That is about the time the tower fell—I would not call it an explosion—it might have been a gas pipe, I thought, that got broken.

Q. That would be after?—A. Yes—there was nothing at that time.

Q. Now what time did the city fire brigade get there?—A. I did not see any of them for a long time after that—after I saw that they were working, I started for some of my men to take down some pictures close to the fire—that is the paintings of the ex-Speakers, and as long as we could stand the smoke—there were no city firemen to be seen there. After I was suffocated and they dragged me out, I went down to my quarters and was there five or ten minutes when one of the city firemen came and asked about the doors being opened, and I said the fire was upstairs and I went up with him again and I did not see any more of them.

Q. The fire wasn't very bad on the Senate side?—A. None at all then—it was only in the House of Commons reading-room then. Then I think it was a city policeman who ran into my quarters and frightened my people and ordered us out, as he said the tower was going to fall, and I could not get in again. I do not know anything more about it—it was a city policeman that came in.

Q. What you mean by the firemen not being there for some time after is that they were not in the Senate, but they were at work?—A. I do not know about that.

Q. The alarm would be given almost automatically?—A. Oh certainly.

As a matter of fact, it is said they did get there within a few minutes?—A. Not in the Senate.

Q. They did not think the Senate would burn as rapidly as the Commons?—A. It would not have burned at all except the fire was in the Commons—you do not generally have fire there.

Q. If there are you put them out?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Col. E. J. CHAMBERS, sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod in the Senate?—A. Yes.

Q. You were there the evening of the fire?—A. Yes, about a quarter to ten.

Q. You were not there at the start?—A. No.

Q. And cannot tell us about that?—A. No.

Q. I suppose you are pretty well acquainted with the conditions in that reading-room?—A. Yes.

Q. There was a considerable amount of combustible material both in the fittings and the furnishing?—A. Yes, considerable.

Q. And you have been a newspaper man?—A. Yes, all my life.

Q. And have been reporting these things and paying attention to them?—A. Yes.

Q. What would be your opinion as to the rapidity with which fire would spread there?—A. Well, I have seen fires—as a newspaper man I have reported several big

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fires. I remember particularly having my attention attracted as to the rapidity with which one fire spread, and therefore I do not consider it so abnormal—it was the Board of Trade building fire in Montreal—it was one of the biggest I witnessed. I was present as an editor of one of the Montreal papers there and naturally observed things—the building stood among a large number of warehouses—it was partly fire-proof then, and I was speaking to friends who had offices there, and they expressed the opinion that it was absolutely useless for them to attempt saving their things as the Board building would not catch on fire. Well, I should imagine within five or ten minutes after the first flames broke out there the whole of that building was in flames—there was no suspicion of incendiarism then.

Q. Then this fire in question might have spread as rapidly as it is said it did spread?—A. Of course, I was not present but I should judge so. It would not surprise me. When I arrived at the Senate and found the fire in the state it was, I was not surprised to find it had attained the extent it had within three-quarters of an hour.

Q. It did not seem to spread towards the Senate it seemed to have gone West—I am advised the wind was a northwest wind. Now if there was any draught when passing through these corridors it would carry it to the Senate, and instead of that it went against the wind?—A. It seemed so. I was not present on the spot, but I was in the Senate three or four hours with men who saw the thing on the Senate side—a Dominion policeman and a young Mr. Perkins, a very intelligent young man, and Mr. Carleton and from the statements of these men given me very shortly after the fire, they say there was a considerable burst of flame from the reading-room towards the Senate. The hose got into action promptly by Constable Moore and Miller and Mr. Perkins, who said that although the fire was going out of the House of Commons door, that it got a draft in an opposite direction all at once—how it was they don't explain, but the flames did come through the Senate door of the reading-room, because subsequently, when engaged in taking down pictures, they passed within three or four feet of this door with these big pictures, but there was no heat, and I could see the wood-work across the corridor at the north-west corner of the Chamber and it was blistered and marked, indicating that there had been considerable heat coming from the reading-room.

Q. Of course there was not the same quantity of inflammable material on the Senate side—no wardrobes?—A. No. The one thing that struck my attention was a statement of the men there to me that when the draft towards the House of Commons became so acute the swinging doors on the Senate side opened with the draft and stood open to such an extent that they were able to use their hose, showing that there was a draft against the wind.

Q. The evidence is, that one constable held the door open while the other constables used the hose?

Mr. PRINGLE: Is not that on the Commons side?

Mr. WHITE: No.

Mr. PRINGLE: Mr. Ewart explains that by the ventilator system?

The WITNESS: Yes.

By Mr. Whitè, K.C.:

Q. Was that working in the Senate?—A. There is one there.

Q. Would it be working when the Senate is not sitting?—A. Probably not.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. If it was working in the Commons it would have a tendency to draw the draft that way?

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By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Another thing, with 'these very inflammable cupboards in the House of Commons corridor, the flames would naturally follow where they would find food, just as a prairie fire would follow grass?—A. No doubt, particularly as the hose was not used on the Commons side, of course, if hose was there, it might be different.

Q. I do not think they could get into that corridor, owing to the inflammable nature of things?—A. Yes. As far as our side goes, the fire was amazingly slow and deliberate. The only hose was that which the Dominion police had, and the fire was two or three hours before it got a grip on it.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. Someone said there was an explosion but I thought it was just a noise. I did not think it was an explosion, and I said not to start any scares, not to start that, and they said there were some on the other side—but it was only a beam falling or something of that kind.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Dr. THOMAS SIMPSON SPROULE sworn.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have been Speaker of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. And are now in the Senate?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you in the building the night of the fire?—A. No.

Q. Then could you tell us anything of the facts?

Mr. PRINGLE, K.C.: What we want from Dr. Sproule particularly is in regard to the action taken to protect these buildings—that is the rules laid down, as I understand they were laid down by him, are the rules existing at present—this we may ascertain by the present Speaker, but Dr. Sproule can give us the rules laid down by him in 1915.

Dr. SPROULE: The rules are that the Sergeant-at-Arms usually carries out my instructions. We discussed the question of danger from fire and also the question of smoking all through the chambers, which I thought very unseemly, improper and dangerous. He advised me that an effort had been made to restrain those who had been smoking, by putting up placards in different places in the lobbies, and in the reading room, and I think I inquired if they were not also put up in the Library, but his reply was that he had no control over the Library, and by a rule established years ago there never was smoking allowed in the Library. I inquired if these placards were up from session to session and if there were any up at the present time. The last session that I was there was the one during which I was more particularly impressed with certain occurrences that I thought ought to be stopped. The Sergeant-at-Arms' reply was that the placards were up then, and I asked him where, and he said in the lobbies of the House of Commons, in the Committee rooms, and different other places around the building. I think I inquired whose duty it was to see that these were kept up, and if kept up why was so much promiscuous smoking going on. I think he said Connolly complained to him and afterwards had a complaint and called him in the second time and asked him if anything was done since and if there were a sufficient number of these notices up, and his reply was that there were. I told him if necessary to have more printed and he said there was a large number. For my own satisfaction I went into the reading room and saw one hanging at the entrance and read it. I was rather surprised to hear the evidence of Mr. Deacon that he had never heard anything about precautions against fire from smoking, for Mr. Deacon is one man that I talked to about this, because of the complaints to me, and that was surprising, for at three different times in one session I had the same subject under consideration with the Sergeant-at-Arms. His report was that it was very much reduced, but with reference to the reading-room, I remember one man said: Most of the men likely to smoke there

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are members of Parliament and you could not restrain them, and my remark was to courteously draw their attention to the fact that the regulations prevented them, but not to argue the question with them nor enter into any altercation with them. With regard to the newspaper men, he said they were in there frequently smoking, and my reply was that they had no right to smoke there, and he could properly tell them it was against the rules, and if they refused to obey to call the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Q. Were there any definite instructions in regard to looking after the paper refuse?—A. Yes, I discussed that with one of the men, but I am not positive whether it was Mr. Deacon or Mr. Spencer. I inquired where the papers were opened and if there were waste-paper baskets there to hold the refuse paper, and he said the papers were opened in the curator's room or behind the wainscotting on the north side, where there was a table, and that they were not opened in the reading room except to be put on the files, and all the refuse papers were immediately taken away, and no waste-paper baskets were in the room containing papers. That was the information given me at the time, and I passed through the room at times afterwards to ascertain if the instructions were strictly carried out, and as far as I could see I thought they were.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. I suppose if your instructions were carried out there would be no smoking?—A. That is sure.

Q. But it would be difficult to restrain the members?—A. Yes, we found it pretty difficult to restrain them.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Is there anything else?—A. I would like to say a word in regard to some observations by yourself at the opening, to the effect that if anyone knew anything relating to the circumstances surrounding the fire, that you ought to know them, and that it was the duty of the person to offer any information on the subject, I may say that on account of warnings received from outside that there might probably be the danger of people coming into those buildings and creating trouble, I had a consultation with the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Q. When would that be?—A. During the last session, 1915, as to what could be done to ensure absolute safety. I saw in the *Citizen* the day before that there had been strict orders given that all doors entering the House of Commons were to be closed at six o'clock excepting one or two which were constantly guarded, and after that all access to the House was shut off from the outside to the public. I saw that, and to my knowledge it was not being carried out, and drew the Sergeant-at-Arms' attention to it. The second night after that, I was writing letters in my office until after ten—it must have been after ten-thirty, when some of the members were going west towards Winnipeg, and I took some letters and put stamps on them and walked to the general post office to post them. I went around the House of Commons towards the West and North and passed the Senate side and passed the Eastern Block, I saw the door of the corridor to the basement wide open and the electric light burning at that time in the basement—I saw two windows where the newspaper men usually do their work both raised up, and my impression was if the intention was and I felt it as to prevent people getting in, these windows should not be open because anybody could put a seven or ten-foot ladder in there and get up. I went around that side of the building, and met no policeman nor anybody else, and went past the Eastern Block and saw three windows there with the lower sash hoisted up so that anybody could put up a ladder and get in. I came back on the canal side, of the Eastern Block, and around the northeast side of the Commons, and this window was still open, and I went into the entrance and along the basement to the corridor of the House of Commons and entered Room 16, and in front of the post office and back to the reading-room and I saw no person inside or outside, and I went back and unlocked the door of my Chambers and went in. The next morning I called the attention of the Sergeant-at-Arms to this,

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and he advised me that the Dominion police have that under their authority and control, and I said that there either was or was not need of protection, and the information I got was that there was protection, and I said we must have better arrangements. He said he would have another consultation with the Chief and see that that was stopped.

Well, we agreed that except when locked, there would be a Dominion policeman at the doors to prevent anyone coming in, except by ticket, and the tickets would be given by myself or the Sergeant-at-Arms, and only to persons vouched for by Members of Parliament. We found a little difficulty, and it was thought advisable to put a messenger along with the policemen, because some of the policemen did not know the members or officials, and I put a messenger who would know the employees and Members of Parliament. Whenever he drew the attention of the policeman that an undesirable was trying to get in, he was to stop him. We had friction from a few sources, one from Members of Parliament whose friends were refused admission on account of not having a pass, and some of the members thought it an insult—we had a good deal of friction but it was carried out to the end of the session, and as far as I know stopped.

As far as the doors, they were usually locked after that. I went out several times to see if they were open, but I only saw some windows open—whoever had the duty to see that they were closed were not attending to their duty, because some were open. That is in the main my knowledge of the circumstances—I can only say from time to time there were very strict orders given by me to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and I have reason to believe they were given by him to the others whose duty it was to carry them out.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Is there anything else?—A. There is nothing particularly in that line—but I would like to say a word that appeals to me about the history of the fire. It was mentioned about the inflammable liquid which burst into flame. I have two or three liquids, but not here with me to-day, that could be placed anywhere—for instance, one on those papers, one of which is ordinary crushed sugar, sold by any grocer and not dangerous, and the other is easy to get at any time, and you take two drops of this liquid and put it on and in two minutes it will start a fire. What prompted me to make reference to this case, is that as one who has studied chemistry for quite a while, and has been experimenting with it, was the statement from various sources in the newspaper that those who inhaled that smoke or fire were at once rendered comparatively useless or unconscious—I do know that when you inhale that smoke it immediately produces spasm of the epiglottis and shuts off the trachea and prevents breathing, and you become absolutely useless and limpid. The Clerk of the House at the first breath he took he did not remember anything more—he remembered being carried out but did not know who carried him—that is Dr. Flint. With reference to that all the accounts in the paper seemed to be similar in character, that those who inhaled it were rendered useless. That left the impression on my mind that it was set by some chemicals because there are several chemicals that will do it. In this case, when the fire started, it started by a few drops of sulphuric acid which has no smell—white sugar has no smell—once you inhale that it produces a choking effect on the throat. The smoke is heavier than the atmosphere and after it goes down the heated air rises. It is the very reverse of what would take place if a fire were started in a room and continued to burn. In that event the air, where the fire was started, becoming heated would be lighter than the surrounding atmosphere and consequently ascend, while the comparative vacuum would call in the cold and heavier air, consequently all doors, if swinging and not fastened, would be forced forward by the current of air rushing in to fill the vacuum. This apparently did not take place, but on the other hand the current of air forced through the halls, in every direction where there was not sufficient resistance encountered, converted into a draught along the halls, and the more easily up the elevator shafts and

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openings upwards. It seemed to me that there is something in that, and the ease with which it could be left around for it is only ordinary powder thrown on a paper. You could put a few drops there and when it would soak through the fire would start immediately—it is a reddish flame at first and afterwards a heavy black smoke. If it was a matter of any interest I could show in a minute the effect.

Q. Do you know of any chemical in the nature of powder which could be thrown along these corridors and with a certain degree of heat would burst into flame?—A. Not at the moment, but all you would require to do would be to lay something on the floor and cover it with ordinary paper and as soon as it soaks through the paper it will start a fire—you could have the fire starting in one minute or half an hour, and wherever the powder is it would follow.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Did it strike you that a very small quantity of that chemical would be required to start that fire, and the policeman at the door using the extinguisher, and Mr. Glass and the others, did not seem to find any injurious effect from it. The effect of a small quantity being necessary to start that fire would have soon disappeared in a large fire—so that the others in the building would feel the effect of smoke?—A. If any considerable quantity of powder, it would be carried by the current.

Q. It would not need a great quantity to start these papers?—A. No, but if you put an ounce of that white sugar you would feel it all through the House.

Q. And if you put an ounce you would feel it there?—A. Yes.

Q. From your knowledge of that reading-room, you knew it was perhaps as inflammable a room as there was in the city?—A. Yes, I think so, very.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. We have the evidence of Mr. Northrup and of Mr. Glass and neither of them smoked. Mr. Glass was there eight or ten minutes and there was no sign of fire. When he leaves all the papers at this desk are on fire—it is pretty hard to account for?—A. What formed an effect in my mind is the fire was started by incendiary work—I do not know of any other way it could have started.

Q. Is there anything else—we have been very interested in what you have said?—A. Nothing at the moment. I thought of saying a few words in regard to the Speaker's Chambers and the unfortunate occurrences there.

Q. We would be glad to hear you on that—you are familiar with the Chambers, and the most unfortunate thing are the deaths there?—A. When you go up the stairway there is a narrow hall and a parlor ten feet wide and about 50 feet long on the left-hand side, and on the right three bed-rooms. In the centre, when going into the bedrooms there was always a light at night and opposite the three windows in the bedrooms there was a fire escape that any one could get out on easily. It was in this room that these ladies I understand lost their lives. My first inquiry was: didn't anyone know where the fire escape was, because these windows to my knowledge you could lift the lower sash and go out. The only statement I saw was a statement in the papers that Mr. Sevigny had instructed them as to the fire escape, and I do not understand how they did not know how to get out, with those instructions. On inquiry I was told the reason why it was not used, and it is a probable one, that the windows had been recently painted and the paint had dried and stuck the windows so that they could not be raised. That is the information that I have received, and I did not know whether there was anything in it or not.

Mr. PRINGLE: I have not heard exactly what occurred as regards the poor unfortunate victims, but I understand one had still a little life remaining when rescued, and that their wrists had been cut as if making an effort to break through the windows—are they double windows?

Dr. SPROULE: They are narrow windows but the lower part opens up.

The investigation was thereupon adjourned until 2.30 p.m.

Pursuant to adjournment, the Commission resumed its investigation at 2.30 p.m.

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RICHARD BAILEY, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a messenger in the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. Where is the messengers' room?—A. In the basement.

Q. Near the reading-room?—A. No, it is the west corner.

Q. Just tell us what you know about this fire?—A. I was down there when the alarm came for fire, and Dr. Chisholm rushed down into the messenger's room, he asked me if I would take a chance to go up after his coat, and I said: "No, doctor, the smoke would put me back." I just started around and as I did, Mr. Law was there and said: "If I had what was in my coat I would not care for my coat—" so I did not see him any after that.

Q. He then started to go up the stairs?—A. I could not say, I did not notice which way he went for I was rushing for my coat in the messengers' room in the back portion.

Q. I thought you said you were in the messengers' room?—A. Yes, but my coat was hanging in the back part.

Q. As to that smoke did you notice anything different from ordinary smoke?—A. I could not say that.

Q. It drove you back when you tried to go up again?—A. Yes.

Q. You heard no explosion?—A. No.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Where was Mr. Law's coat?—A. In 213 on the top flat.

Q. Is that in the old or new part of the building?—A. In the old part—over the Senate side.

Q. Near the Railway Committee room?—A. Yes.

Q. Then you were in the messengers room just on the main side of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. And Mr. Law was in there?—A. Yes.

Q. How did he happen to be there?—A. I think the smoke drove him there—they all seemed to come down that way.

Q. How did he get there—through the inner stairs?—A. He could go down there, but I could not say that.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. All you know is he and Mr. Chisholm were there?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. We just wanted information about Mr. Law—you were the last to see him?—A. Well I saw him there.

Q. The last you saw he was going up the stairs?—A. No, he was standing right near me and said: "If I had what was in my coat I would not care for my coat."

Q. And he would have to go a long way to get to 213?—A. Yes.

Q. Where you were was on the west side?—A. Yes.

Q. He would have to go up and cross over to the Senate side—

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. He might go up that winding stairway on the west side of the post office lobby? Mr. PRINGLE: Yes, that is so, he might go up the west side.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

W. G. THOMPSON, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are an electrician in the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were in your room the night of the fire?—A. Yes.

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Q. Where is your room?—A. At the foot of the winding stair on the Chamber floor about ten feet from the main lobby.

Q. West of the post office?—A. Yes.

Q. What attracted your attention first to the fire?—A. Some were going along the corridor crying "fire"—I went out of my room and went to the east corner and met Charles Stewart coming towards the post office with his coat collar up and members and pages in front of him, and he said there was no use going there as the reading-room was on fire, and I came across to the west side and Sergeant Carroll was there pulling the hose out, and I gave him a hand. That is at the stand-pipe at the Speaker's door—we dropped that because it was too hot and we went towards Sir Robert Borden's room—there was another stand-pipe there and we got the hose down there, but had to give up on account of the heat and the smoke.

Q. The fire was very hot?—A. Terrible, it was like a furnace.

Q. All these cupboards along the corridors were on fire?—A. Yes, on both sides.

Q. And this is where you were trying to fight the fire?—A. Yes, doing our best.

Q. What are your duties?—A. Looking after the bells, and the phones, and the lights, and my duty every day is to see that the division bells ring when the Speaker takes his Chair. That night I went to the Library corridor in front of the Minister of Railways room and went into the Library and from that to the Western corridor along up by Sir Robert Borden's room and Sir Wilfrid's and then back to my room.

Q. Have you anything to do with the fire alarm system?—A. No, sir, nothing.

Q. And you know nothing about it?—A. Just how it was installed.

Q. You were the man who found Mr. Laplante?—A. Yes, Saturday morning, in the Deputy Speaker's floor upstairs.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. The new part of the House of Commons was built during the last few years—Sir Robert Borden's room is in the north-west corner of the new wing?—A. Yes.

Q. The corridor that leads from there to the corridor immediately adjoining the Chamber—there are no wardrobes in that corridor?—A. No, sir, that is a new wing—a solid wall.

Q. Was there much of a flame going down that corridor?—A. No, mostly smoke, and the heat was from the flames where the members' wardrobes were.

Q. That corridor still stands?—A. Yes.

Q. There is nothing burnt in that corridor?—A. No, there is nothing to burn—it is all solid. I may say in the Speaker's old quarters over the old Hansard room where the Minister of Finance's room is now, to the Speaker's office there is a passage clear through from the reading-room along the roof so as to square those rooms in where Madame Sevigny had her servants' rooms. That is where the smoke get into the new apartments of the Speaker upstairs. After I get through with the Dominion police we went outside and I directed Chief Graham how to get into the Speaker's quarters, that is where he would likely find the bodies of the women.

Q. You did not have anything to do with taking out the bodies of the ladies?—A. No. Madame Sevigny told me after coming out of the messengers room that the two ladies were in there and for God's sake to get them out. I told Chief Graham and he said: "We will do our best," and he sent two men up and they were overcome with smoke.

Q. There is a report that they were not rescued for three hours after the fire?—A. Oh no, the fire of course was so rapid. It was ten or fifteen minutes when Mr. Carroll said to clear this corridor and then I rushed around to the Speaker, and that is where I met Madame Sevigny, after Madame Dussault had jumped. Chief Graham said he would try again and we went around to the north corridor, where Dr. Sproule said there was a little sitting-room 10 feet wide and 30 long, but there was no sign of any person there and then stones began to fall from overhead and Chief Graham said

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there is no use working here and we will go around to the front on the outside and it was then they got the bodies. First of all the iron gate was not open and the Chief asked who had the keys.

Q. Then from the moment Madame Sevigny said that those women were in there every effort was made to get them?—A. Yes, every effort—two of Chief Graham's men tried to—and the next time he said: "I have got them."

Q. There was one still living?—A. Yes, there was still a sign of life.

Q. What efforts were made to resuscitate them?—A. Sir Sam Hughes said to run to the front and call for doctors and I did and no doctors responded, but a nurse came around, and I piloted them around to 303, Mr. Jamieson's room. At that time there were doctors there and they had pulmotors, and I stayed alongside bringing hot water from the Speaker's kitchen to try and induce circulation.

Q. Every effort was made to revive them?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. And in your opinion, it could not have been more than 15 minutes after the fire started before the bodies were found?—A. Not more than that—twenty minutes at the most.

Q. Is there any distinction between the alarm bell and the division bell?—A. Yes, there is, the fire bell is much louder than mine.

Q. Did you hear the fire alarm bell?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. No, no explosions.

By His Honour, Judge MacTavish:

Q. Did you notice the electric lights go out?—A. Not for some time—they went out circuit by circuit.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Is there any possibility of this fire having started from electric wires?—A. Not in the reading room—the fuses for the reading room are 30 feet distant from the nearest paper rack.

Q. You spoke of a passage—is it underground?—A. No—from the roof.

Q. Clean across to the Speaker's apartment?—A. Yes.

Q. What is it built of?—A. Two by four scantling and lath and a floor over it.

Q. And a ceiling?—A. No, no ceiling—it is four feet at the highest part and then goes down to the eave of the roof—it is just to square the place inside.

Q. It is a place where the fire would sweep?—A. Oh yes, that is where the smoke came from that troubled Chief Graham's men.

By His Honour, Judge MacTavish:

Q. It is stated in the newspapers that the lights went out in about half an hour?—A. There were some—Mr. Wilson, the man who installed the recent wiring, came around and put them on.

Q. You do not know how long they were out?—A. No, sir.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Sergeant EDWARD CARROLL, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. You are sergeant in the Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. And on the evening of the fire you were in charge of the police in the House of Commons?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know how many men were on duty that night?—A. Seven men—seven uniformed and one plain clothes man.

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Q. What time did you go on duty?—A. About a quarter after nine in the morning, and went to lunch at one, and was back at a quarter after two, and remained until the fire occurred.

Q. You speak of seeing some gentleman who called to see Mr. W. H. Bennett, M.P., about 8.35?—A. Yes.

Q. He sent in his card?—A. I was not there when he sent in his card, but it seemed he had sent in his card but Mr. Bennett was not in the Chamber and they directed him to his room, 205, on the top floor, and I happened to be there and he said he could not find 205, and I went with him and showed it to him and he knocked at the door, and I just went away as soon as I saw that there was some person coming to the door, and I just went around the corner to the privy on the west side and in about a minute he came along and said that was R. B. Bennett and it was W. H. Bennett he wanted, and I said: it could not be R. B. Bennett as his room was down on the next floor. He insisted it was him, and I said you had better go down and find out. He went down just ahead of me, and I was standing at the door leading into the corridor of Room 16 and was there a few minutes when Constable Helmer shouted "Fire" in the reading-room," and I went there and it seemed at the second and third desks and they were all ablaze to pretty near the ceiling; of course I do not know how long it had been burning then. I ran for the hose at the Speaker's Chambers and Constable Helmer and I got it in operation, and just as we did the fire seemed to come out the door of the Commons side of the reading room, and I ran down to the west end of the corridor where there was another hose to get it in operation, and when it was going pretty good the smoke and heat came so strong that I could not stay there and I ran around the corridor where the reporters' rooms are situated and shouted "fire" while going, and when I got there there was quite a large crowd in front of the telegraph office, and I shouted to them to get out as quick as they could. I tried to get into 16 and just got in but could not get any further. I heard some people shouting there. I went downstairs and went to the courtyard and got a ladder and got to 16 and got the people down. There was one gentleman, a military officer, who came down and I told him to get the rest down and I would go to the front. I went to the front and the messengers' rooms were filled with smoke and the front lobby also. Some person had a hose in the Senate side, into the post office lobby of the House of Commons. Dr. Clarke came out after that, and I took the hose to the Hansard room entrance on the Senate side, and I went in there and broke a window in the back and got the hose working on to the reading room and stayed there as long as I could. When it got too bad I got down and got every person out of the main lobby to give the firemen a chance to work.

Q. Had the firemen arrived then?—A. Not then, but when I got them out the firemen were working at the back.

Q. Where is that room that you speak of as Mr. Bennett's room 205?—A. Up on the top floor, in the front of the building—in the new wing.

Q. Away altogether from the reading-room?—A. Oh, yes, the southwest corner from the reading-room.

Q. There wasn't anything that attracted your suspicion to the man that wanted to see Mr. Bennett?—A. No, nothing.

Q. He came down ahead of you, just prior to the fire starting?—A. Yes.

Q. And the alarm was given shortly after you came down?—A. About five or seven minutes.

Q. You were not in the reading-room between eight and nine?—A. No, but there was a constable on duty at the Senate side of the reading-room and on the House of Commons side as well, up to 8.30.

Q. The latter was there after 8.30?—A. Yes.

Q. But the other man was relieved at 8.30?—A. Yes.

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Q. Did you notice anything peculiar about the smoke beyond it being ordinary smoke?—A. No, sir, it was just smoke as any other smoke I have been in or come in contact with—just thick smoke.

Q. You are a sergeant in the Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were in charge of the police?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Since the outbreak of war there have been extra precautions taken there?—A. Yes.

Q. How many of the Dominion police are stationed at the House of Commons?—A. Seven men on duty in uniform with two plain clothesmen.

Q. In the House of Commons alone you had seven men on duty—five uniform men?—A. Seven uniformed men and two in plain clothes.

Q. That is nine?—A. Yes, and myself.

Q. That makes ten?—A. Yes.

Q. So you had a guard on each corridor on the east and west corridors of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. Also at the reading-room door on the Commons side?—A. Yes.

Q. And one on the Senate side?—A. Yes leading to the Library and reading-room.

Q. But only on the Senate side up to 8.30 o'clock.—A. Yes.

Q. Then I heard it stated there were no men in private clothes but you had two?—A. Yes.

Q. What was their duty?—A. To patrol the building to see if any suspicious characters around.

Q. How long were those on duty?—A. One came on nine o'clock in the morning and stayed until twelve at noon and in the afternoon from two to six, and the other used to come on at 12.20 in the afternoon and stay on until five and then from 20 after six to the time the House adjourns.

Q. Then when the fire started there were men on duty in plain clothes as well as the regular police?—A. Yes, Constable Knox was a plain clothes man.

Q. Prior to the outbreak of the war you did not take such great precautions?—A. No, sir, there was no sergeant in charge before the war broke out.

Q. And you were the sergeant in charge?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Do you know anything about the facility with which cards for the gallery were obtained—was there any complaint about that?—A. There has been trouble about people entering the gallery—that is employees of the House would take people in with them and the Members as well took people with them whom they did not know, and there were often people coming up looking for a Member and I would say if you will wait you will see him and they would say: I do not know him to see him—at the same time perhaps the Member never saw them. Sometimes people would come up and they would say they met such a Member in the Chateau, and were told by him that if they would come up they would get a card for the gallery, but the Member would not know them perhaps any more than to meet them in the hotel.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

(At this stage of the proceedings, two fires were started on the table of the Chamber, one a paper lighted by a match, and the other on a paper by means of a chemical preparation, and Mr. Glass, M.P., was recalled for the purpose of noticing any distinction between them or resemblance to the fire in the reading-room when he first saw it.)

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You have seen these fires here, did the one started with a match burn faster than the fire started with a chemical preparation?—A. I do not think it did, until the papers were disturbed.

Q. Did it burn in a manner similar, as far as you can tell, to the fire started by the chemical?—A. More so than the other one.

Q. More so than the fire started by the match?—A. Yes.

Q. Can you see any difference in the appearance of those two fires, the one started with the chemical and the other started with a match—in the appearance of the flame?—A. Yes, seeing them there the appearance of this one is more like it to me—I mean the one started with the chemical.

Q. It appears more like the one started with the chemical than the one started with a match?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

EDGAR STANFIELD, sworn.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You have given us two fires, one started by a chemical solution and the other by a match—which of these fires is the more easily extinguished?—A. The one started with the match.

Q. Which of these fires created the greater blaze at the start?—A. The one from the chemical.

Q. That solution is not a very difficult solution?—A. No.

Q. You can time it to go off at a very short or a very long period?—A. We have a method by which we can delay it.

Q. Supposing a man poured that on a newspaper in the reading room, how long could you delay its bursting into flames?—A. The time would depend upon the temperature on the room and the draught in the reading room. We have no means of saying under those conditions, but under conditions that we experienced with, we delayed it one hour and thirty-five minutes.

Q. This solution used here has a strong odour?—A. Yes.

Q. Is there one that is practically odourless?—A. I do not know of one—there may be but I do not know of it.

Q. It is said, whether rightly or wrongly, that one could have passed through those corridors sprinkling a chemical, and that immediately the temperature got to a certain point that chemical would burst into flame—have you any test of any powder with regard to that?—A. There are many chemicals—gun-powder for example and many others would have the same effect.

Q. Then it would be possible for a man to drop into the reading room and get behind this desk and throw a little solution on the top and walk away and let this powder scatter around the corridors, and once it got to a certain temperature the fire would start and the corridors would burst into flames?—A. It would accelerate the fire. But on the floor of the corridors if it was not very inflammable it would not make much difference.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. It would have to be spread in a light quantity so as not to be noticed?—A. I think so.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I do not know whether this is true, but I am advised it can be spread in small quantities?—A. I do not know of anything that would do damage in that way, but it might be probable.

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By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. When you say "we have discovered methods of delaying the ignition of the chemical" you experimented with to-day, do you mean to say that is your own personal experimenting in it?—A. Yes.

Q. And you do not know whether that knowledge is general amongst men like yourself?—A. No—I did not know any method by which it could be delayed until I made those experiments.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Chief GRAHAM, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are chief of the Fire Department of the city of Ottawa?—A. Yes.

Q. And were you present with the brigade at the fire at the Parliament Buildings on February 3rd?—A. I was.

Q. Do you know what time the alarm was sounded?—A. 8.57 p.m.

Q. And that would be from the automatic system?—A. From the fire alarm box located in the Central Block.

Q. Which is an automatic system?—A. Yes, connected with our system.

Q. Do you know how long it was after that before you reached the fire?—A. It must have been two or three minutes—not more.

Q. Then you would be there practically at nine o'clock?—A. Yes.

Q. Do you know how many streams you got on and how soon?—A. There was a stream stretched in as I arrived there, from motor engine 8—they were ahead of me and I was next.

Q. Do you know how many streams you put on?—A. Altogether, twenty-one.

Q. Had you quite sufficient pressure?—A. First class—our pressure on the hill was 60 pounds on the hydrant.

Q. That is as good as any other part of the city except Lower Town?—A. Yes. It is a booster—the Hill is connected with our booster system. I have a report of the fire here.

Q. This is a good deal of what you heard from other sources?—A. Yes, and a good deal from what I saw myself.

Q. In the first place, was there any difficulty about any hydrants on the Hill?—A. One was frozen, but not badly—we thawed it out. There was very little delay in that. I might state that those hydrants are not looked after by the city, they are looked after by the Government, which is a bad arrangement.

Q. If looked after by the city would they be better or worse?—A. They would be better looked after.

Q. Where was the great body of the fire?—A. The first line we stretched in was on the west side of the Library—in between that and the reading-room—west of the passageway leading to the Library.

Q. You mean from the front entrance?—A. No, from the back. The hydrant we first took was on the northwest corner of the grounds and we took the hose up to the Speaker's entrance.

Q. And started to work on the north corridor of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you able to continue working there?—A. For some time until I brought them out, when there was danger of the walls and the tower falling down, which afterwards did fall, about twenty-five or thirty minutes after.

Q. Tell us about the two ladies in the Speaker's apartment?—A. Yes, when we first arrived there, Mrs. Sevigny was up about the third window—on the third story, and the captain of the motor truck went to a truck and got a life-saving machine off it, and a Dominion police ran with it to underneath the window, where Mrs. Sevigny was, and she fell off and struck it in an unconscious condition and she was taken away.

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There was other talk about other ladies up in the building, but we often get reports like that with nothing in them, but Mr. Sevigny said sure, "they are guests" and I had ladders raised, but they could not get in owing to the heavy smoke. They persisted in it. I sent for smoke helmets and put a smoke helmet on one of the men and he went into the building and something must have gone wrong with the smoke helmet, for he was overcome and had to be brought down. Twenty-five or thirty minutes elapsed before we could get into the building and two firemen made their way in and found Mrs. Morin and Mrs. Bray, and brought them out and down the wall. General Hughes was there, and he had sent for an ambulance and a pulmotor and there was a doctor from the 77th who attempted resuscitation, but they both died.

Q. One lady was alive?—A. One lady—I put my hand on her heart—I cut her dress open and corset strings and her heart was beating when we brought her out.

Q. And they devoted their attention to resuscitating her?—A. Yes, I left them, then—I know they did not succeed.

Q. How long would that be after the alarm that the ladies were taken out?—A. Twenty-five or thirty minutes.

Q. It is stated by a street rumour, that it was two or three hours?—A. That is not so.

Q. It is not the truth?—A. Not at all—it was twenty-five or thirty minutes.

Q. This building was equipped by the May-Oatway Automatic Fire Alarm system?—A. Yes, and that was recommended by me three or four years ago—it was partly installed in the House of Commons, Senate and Library and completely installed last year.

Q. What is that system?—A. I will explain it.

Q. Is it one of the most modern?—A. Yes. I might state how it came about. This system is installed at the Provincial Buildings in Toronto, and I happened to be in Toronto and inspected the system, and when I came home the papers gave it a write-up and Dr. Chabot asked me to explain it and we had an interview with the late Hon. Mr. Monk who sent out some officials from the Government to inspect several different systems and they choose the May-Oatway as being the best. That is how it came to be installed.

Q. It is an automatic system?—A. It says in my report:—

"This is an automatic thermostat alarm system, and in case of fire an alarm is transmitted to the Fire Department through the medium of an auxiliary box connected direct to the city fire alarm circuit."

Q. And it worked?—A. When I got there I met a policeman and he told me when he ran to give the alarm that he heard the buzzer going—that is the buzzer that goes off—this system is connected with an announcing-board and when the detector goes off it indicates what part of the building the fire is in, and at the same time starts a buzzer and increases the pumps—that is the pressure. Some person had been there ahead of me to give the alarm—I sent in a second alarm eight minutes after the first alarm.

Q. The hose company laid their streams on their arriving there?—A. Yes. I have a sketch here of the streams laid.

(Sketch produced as Exhibit No. 9.)

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. It shows all the streams?—A. Yes, and also the system of motors put up on the Hill.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The Hook and Ladder Company directed their attention to the people that may be entrapped in the building, and took out the bodies of Mrs. Bray and Mrs. Morin afterwards.—A. Yes.

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Q. You say the fire must have spread with lightning-like rapidity into the House of Commons Chamber and into the Senate Chamber.—A. Yes.

Q. You say the construction of it was a veritable forest of timber?—A. Yes.

Q. The ceiling of both of these Chambers were of glass, which in your opinion broke quickly and allowed the fire to drop down into both those Chambers which were completely burned out. The rapid spread of this fire, you say, was due to the fact that there was not a fire check in the building, no precautions whatever being taken in this respect—now what do you mean by fire check?—A. For instance all corridors should have fire checks—in all modern buildings they put in a check that is as many as would prevent the rapid advance of flame or smoke.

Q. An iron door?—A. Something like that.

Q. Like a bulkhead in a ship?—A. Very similar.

Q. There were none of these?—A. No.

Q. And it has been described—or you are familiar with the reading room?—A. Not very familiar—quite the opposite. That is one of the great difficulties with the buildings there, that is, the fire department of the city have very little knowledge of them, and that is contrary to suggestions that I have made from time to time.

Q. Of course, that is merely a matter that has to be settled?—A. Yes, but it is very important.

Q. Perhaps it is a question of divided authority? We will keep away from that as we can for the present, but you know it has been described as a place where there are several hundreds of newspapers in single files hanging upon a partition made of white pine upon which has been placed nobody knows how many coatings of varnish—the fire here appears to have started in the bottom of one of the desks, in a lower shelf of the desks, and stretched to these files hanging on the walls and immediately almost the whole interior of that room was in a blaze—from your experience, and from the description I have just given, would you consider that an extraordinary inflammable building?—A. Of course, it was a good place to start a fire, but I cannot conceive of the idea that that fire started and gained such rapid headway with a policeman fighting with chemicals, and water that had only started in one spot. I believe the men are honest in their opinion that it started in that paper file or desk, but my opinion is that it started in a lot of files all over the room.

Q. Of course, that is a matter of opinion, but the question is this: I am asking you whether that condition is not one in which even that a fire started in one place and the blaze, as some of the witnesses described the moment it caught on the wall it seemed to go up the wall with great rapidity on the varnish and inflammable material—that likely to occur?—A. I do not see how it would with men right on the spot.

Q. But never mind the men—supposing the men were not there?—A. But if not there she would certainly go fast.

Q. That is the idea—I have a personal idea of dropping a match underneath a doorway where it caught on to some varnish and I had hard work to beat out the flame, and I had noticed it immediately.—A. This must have gone very very fast—it was going through the roof before I got on the hill.

Q. Yes, the alarm would only work when a sufficient degree of heat?—A. Yes, but not very much.

Q. At what degree?—A. I do not know. Mr. Giroux would know that.

Q. It would require a certain heat?—A. It would work with any increased temperature—the burning of a waste-paper basket would set it off.

Q. That would happen to be close to it.—A. No, on the floor, with the detector hanging on the ceiling.

Q. You sounded a general alarm?—A. Yes, eight minutes afterwards.

Q. In your report, or in the report printed in the *Citizen* it says: “Some sections described as fire traps, Fire Chief Graham has prepared his report on the fire protection appliances in the Government Buildings, and has forwarded to the Deputy

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Minister of Public Works. The Chief has completed a thorough inspection of all the Government buildings. Some of the extinguishers and other equipments were found to be useless, and the stand pipes which are outside of the buildings were discovered to be of a size that would not fit the City hose. The House of Commons should have more chemical extinguishers, the main supplying the attic and roof is of no service, being without water under ordinary domestic pressure. This applies to the whole of the Main building. On the Senate side I found a hydrant covered up with boxes and books and in the library there are two hydrants enclosed in the cupboards and locked —?—A. That is some time ago. They have put in some extinguishers since.

Q. That has been all altered since?—A. Yes.

Q. Now, in the *Free Press* of February 5, 1916, it says that Chief Graham after hearing the testimony of these men, that is, Mr. Stewart, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Helmer, expresses the belief that the extinguishers had been tampered with and the materials replaced by an inflammable substance.—A. No, I do not know how they got that statement—they did not get it from me.

Q. That could be done?—A. Yes, but I do not know anything about it. I know it has been done, but I did not make any statement in regard to fire extinguishers.

Q. You are said to have stated in another local paper, that the fire was set and well set?—A. That was my opinion and still is my opinion.

Q. And where would you say it was—would it be done in the reading room?—A. Probably, that is where it started.

Q. What do you base that on?—A. On the rapid spread of this fire, and during the fire contrary to what some others have said, I certainly heard very heavy explosions, and saw the effect of one explosion. Mr. Johnson happened to be with me when one took place.

Q. How long would that be after you got there?—A. It was shortly after we took the ladies out, about half an hour after.

Q. Here it is: "I distinctly heard fire explosions the kind of which I never heard at a fire before."—A. I happened to be with Major Stetham, who is just back from the front, and he said they were very much like the explosions of Adien shells.

Q. Is the Major you mention in the city?—A. I do not know, he was working that night.

Q. Were these explosions at regular intervals?—A. No, there was quite a while between some of them. The first I heard was when we were in the courtyard in the rear of the Speaker's quarters. That is, when the wall fell and buried those men working in the basement.

Q. Would you say it might have been the falling of the wall?—A. No, it was before the wall fell. The stones did not only fall against the other wall, but were piled up against the opposite wall, we hurried to get out of the courtyard.

Q. You say with the May-Oatway Automatic Fire Alarm system, it gives an alarm about 120 degrees?—A. That is what I have been told, I am not sure of that.

Q. Then that is one of the reasons you say here the May-Oatway gives an alarm at 120 degrees, and it follows that no fire could have gained such headway unless planned?—A. No, not gained such rapid headway throughout that room.

Q. But you start out by saying 120 degrees?—A. Why I remembered correctly it is that, I was told.

Q. That is what you gave to the paper on February 4, and it all depends whether that is the temperature at which the system gave alarm—whether planned or not?—A. They have them to go off at different temperatures.

Q. You did not, then, when making that statement know at what temperature this alarm would work?—A. No.

Q. So that statement may be considered as not founded on fact, and "There is some question whether the alarm was sent in by hand or automatically, but Chief Graham says when he got there, he found the glass broken and the key inside, showing

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the alarm had been prompt"?—A. They got mixed up in that—the key of that box is locked in the box, and there was a small glass in front of the key which is broken by any person that wants to open it.

Q. And the key is used to set the alarm?—A. No, to open the box, and there is a hook inside to pull the alarm.

Q. So that statement is not right—you are the only gentleman so far has heard explosions—you are quite sure you heard four or five distinct explosions?—A. Yes.

Q. And the first one you put at 25 minutes after the fire?—A. Yes—I may just locate that, because we saw the effects of that.

Q. But were the other four before or after?—A. They were afterwards.

Q. Then they would be how long after the fire started?—A. I do not know. There are other persons who heard explosions besides myself, surely.

Q. I am just saying you are the first who gave us the information—all the others deny they heard any, and most of them have been asked—anyway you have no objections to this report going in?—A. No.

(Report filed as Exhibit No. 10.)

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. How long have you been chief of the fire brigade in Ottawa?—A. Six years.

Q. Judge MacTavish says you have been fighting fires all your life?—A. I have been 26 years connected with the department.

Q. And you must necessarily have a large experience in fires?—A. I have had with a good many.

Q. Were you with the Ottawa University fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Did that burn as rapidly as this?—A. It did—it burned very rapidly.

Q. I do not know where I saw this interview, but I think in the *Montreal Standard*, in which you expressed the opinion strongly, that the fire was set and well set—what are your reasons for that belief?—A. When I arrived within sight of the building, which would not have been more than a few minutes afterwards, I happened to be in the station where my automobile is on Laurier Avenue, and I made pretty good time, and passed the motor truck from No. 6 station here, we had had several false alarms lately from the West Block, and coming up Nicholas Street I said to the chauffeur, "I wonder if this is another false alarm," and when we came in view of the building at Elgin Street, he said, "This is the real thing this time"—we could see the reflection of the fire—I did not know what kind of a roof was on it.

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. It was glass on the reading room.—A. Well, when I got there, I drove around to the rear of the library, and the fire was bursting out in great shape.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You said to Mr. White that you thought a number of fires started almost simultaneously in that room?—A. Yes, that is my opinion.

Q. And you base that simply on the rapidity of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. You think if one small blaze at that desk with the fire extinguisher, you think that ought to have been able to check it?—A. Yes. We extinguish 50 per cent of the fires in Ottawa with chemicals.

Q. You know nothing as to whether the fire extinguishers were in good order or not?—A. No. I might say I tried a couple of them afterwards and they worked first-rate.

Q. Where did you get them?—A. Upstairs, the next day in the new building, in the part which was not destroyed. Mayor Porter and I tried a couple, and we found that they worked all right.

Q. They were in good order?—A. Yes.

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Q. You got there pretty quickly according to your record—your alarm sounded at 8.57?—A. Yes, and a second alarm came in at 9.05.

Q. What time were you on the ground at the House of Commons?—A. I drove around to the back of the building and stayed there a few seconds and started back. It was quite icy, but I ran as fast as I could run, and sent in the second alarm.

Q. The fire brigade had not got there before the second alarm?—A. Oh, yes.

Q. The second alarm went in at 9.05 and the first at 8.57, according to Mr. Simpson?—A. Yes.

Q. While this report will go in, I would like to get it on the evidence, there were steam engines 4, 7, and 9, and hose company, and 2, 3, and 8 combination motor engine and hose company, 3, 7, and 8 hook and ladder company, and 4 steam fire engines responded on the first alarm?—A. Yes.

Q. And 6, 19, and 11 hose company and 10 hook and ladder truck and 7 and 9 relief fire engines responded on the second alarm?—A. Yes.

Q. And after that a hose company, and a steam fire engine responded?—A. Yes, the Hull Company.

Q. There were 78 men engaged?—A. Yes.

Q. I have no doubt that every effort was made by yourself and by your firemen to rescue the poor unfortunates in that building. You quite agree that everything possible was done?—A. Yes; there was no let up.

Q. From the moment you knew that those women were in the Speaker's chamber, until rescued, there was no let up?—A. No.

Q. Did any of your force lose their lives?—A. No.

Q. And were these men who were lost buried in the debris?—A. A Dominion policeman, an employee of the Public Works, and an employee of the Post Office Department—they took the stream from the stand pipe—that is the hose attached to the stand pipe in the basement underneath the Speaker's quarters, and I think their idea was to lead along into the courtyard over near the boiler house, and in getting along there this tower came down and buried them—that is the tower over the Speaker's stairway.

Q. I do not think we have it on the record as far as the exact loss of life—what was it?—A. Seven, Mrs. Morin, and Mrs. Bray, Dominion Police Constable Desjardins, and Alphonse Desjardins, and Randolph Fannin, J. B. R. LaPlante, and Mr. Law, M.P.

Q. You do not know anything about Mr. Law?—A. No, I did not hear of it until next day, and I did not know anything about Mr. LaPlante either, until next day.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

It occurs to me since your opinion is that it was set in several places,—do you mean in the reading room?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

I suppose a man passing through that reading-room with chemicals properly mixed and knowing in what time they would cause a fire, it would be a very simple matter to place the chemicals on one of those shelves and scattered on newspapers on the walls and one fire then would start ahead of the others, just by the space of time that the chemicals were fixed?—A. I think so, and I will say, last year we had a fire on Bank street—the fire started in one corner at 2 o'clock in the morning, and we put it out, and while in there another fire started, not more than 20 feet away. However, in many big arson cases in the States, they have proven that the fires have been started by chemicals and spontaneous combustion. A piece of waste soaked in linseed oil will go off in a short while. We have lots of fires on spontaneous combustion.

Q. It seems to me, it is quite reasonable that it could be done, not saying that it was done,—that he could place it at one place, and follow it up at another place and fires would be started in different places around the room.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

By Mr. White, K.C.:

I would ask the Chief to take into consideration the statement of Constable Moore, the first who started with the extinguisher—he says he started with the extinguisher on the Commons side where it started, and failed to extinguish it—he says it caught on the papers on the side of the wall and went up immediately, and then he went to the Senate side, and turned on the hose there, and he kept down the fire from that side; he kept the fire on the other side—and no person, either Mrs. Verville, nor Mr. Glass, nor the constables speak of seeing more than one fire in the one place.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Yes, one fire, naturally, had to start, but it might have been only the matter of a few minutes when the whole room was in a mass of flames, that is, the other fires might have followed quickly and the whole room go into a mass of flames.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

But, they practically controlled the fire on the Senate side?—A. With a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch nozzle, and 80 pounds pressure behind it, under ordinary circumstances, I cannot understand why they could not put it out if only in one spot.

Q. Well, there are lots of things that nobody can understand.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

There is nothing more, unless there is something that you can think of.

And furthermore, Witness deposeth not.

(The inquiry was thereupon adjourned until 2.30 o'clock next day, Wednesday, February 16, 1916.)

EXHIBIT No. 10.

(REPORT OF FIRE CHIEF GRAHAM.)

OTTAWA FIRE DEPARTMENT—FIRE REPORT.

District No.: Western.
 Box: No. 255 and Second Alarm. Day: Thursday. Date, Feb. 3, 1916.
 Timed received: 8.57 and 9.05 o'clock p.m., by gong.
 Street: Parliament Hill. Ward: Victoria.
 Description of building, stories: 3 and 4. Material: stone.
 Occupied by: Dominion Government as Parliament Buildings.
 Owner: Dominion Government.
 Fire originated on: First floor; in reading-room.
 Caused by: First noticed at desk among some newspapers.
 Fire extended: Practically throughout building.
 Hydrant was located: All hydrants except one on Parliament Hill, and one on Wellington street.
 Served by Engines: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and Relief engine and Hull engine.
 Number of streams laid: 20.
 Length of hose in feet: 11,800.
 Extinguished with: Fourteen engine pipe-streams and two deluge streams of three lines apiece.
 Returned quarters: Fire under control at 2 o'clock a.m.
 Ladders used: 861 feet.
 Services of salvage: 18 salvage covers.
 Services of steam engine: No. 4 worked 22 hours, No. 7 worked 27 hours, No. 9 worked 24 hours; Relief engine worked 22 hours; Hull engine worked 12 hours.
 Services of motor engines: No. 2 worked 252 hours; No. 3 worked 22 hours; No. 8 worked 23 hours.

Remarks.

This fire is reported to have originated in the reading room, and must have spread very rapidly, for within two minutes of our receiving the alarm, No. 8 motor engine company was on the Hill, the fire by that time broken through the roof. I was the next to arrive, and drove around to the rear of the library, and I at once saw that the fire was going to be a serious one, and immediately ran back to the box

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located inside of building near tower entrance, and sent in the second alarm. This building is equipped with the May-Oatway Automatic Fire Alarm system, which is connected direct with a Fire Alarm system. I was told by a Dominion Policeman that the box was working when he arrived, to send in the alarm, but I found the glass covering the key of the box broken, thus showing that someone had attempted to send in the alarm. This, of course, did not delay me any in sending in the second alarm, which you will notice came in eight minutes after the first alarm. The hose companies as they arrived were placed as indicated on attached plan. The hook and ladder companies first directed their attention to the saving of different persons who were trapped in the building. Mrs. Sevigny, wife of the Speaker of the House of Commons, and two lady guests were caught on the third story of the Speaker's chambers. Mrs. Sevigny was rescued by jumping into a fire-department life-saving machine, and the bodies of Mrs. Bray and Mrs. Morin were discovered some 25 or 30 minutes later by Firemen Schonherr and Daoust, and brought to the ground by means of one of our ladders; resuscitation was attempted by doctors from the 77th regiment, but both ladies expired through suffocation and shock. Quite a number of men were rescued from the western side of the building, by means of our ladders. During the course of the fire, there were several detonations which brought down towers and chimneys, one tower that fell killed three men, Dominion Police Constable Desjardine, Alphonse Desjardins, employed in the Public Works Department as a steamfitter, and Walter Fanning employed in the Post Office Department. These men were directing a stream from one of the stand-pipes in the building, and were buried under tons of debris when this tower fell. Mr. J. B. Leplant, Assistant Law Clerk of the House of Commons, was overcome in one of the rooms, and his remains were recovered in a badly burned condition next day. Mr. Law, a member of Parliament, was also caught in the building, but his remains have not yet been recovered.

This fire must have spread with lightning rapidity; the heat and flame first spread around the corridors of the House of Commons Chamber, and into the roof of the House of Commons and Senate Chambers, which were wide open, the construction of which was a veritable forest of timber. The ceilings of both of these chambers were of glass, which in my opinion broke quickly and allowed the fire to drop down into both those chambers, which were completely burned out. The rapid spread of this fire was due to the fact that there was not a fire check in the building, no precautions whatever being taken in this respect.

Just recently the May-Oatway Automatic Fire Alarm system was installed in this and other Government buildings. This is an automatic thermostat alarm system, and in case of fire an alarm is transmitted to the fire department through the medium of an auxiliary box connected direct to the city fire alarm circuit. They also installed throughout the buildings a large quantity of chemical extinguishers, and hose connected to their standpipes and mains. These improvements being carried out on my recommendations made in 1910.

But the chief difficulty is as I have on several occasions pointed out, that our firemen know absolutely nothing about these buildings, as this department has no jurisdiction whatever over any Government buildings, the fire equipment, etc., being looked after by the Dominion Police. Nos. 1, 4, 7, 9 hose companies, and Nos. 2, 3, 8 combination motor engine and hose companies, No. 3, 7, 8 hook and ladder companies, and No. 4 steam engine responded on the first alarm. No. 6, 10, 11 hose companies and No. 10 hook and ladder truck and No. 7, 9 relief steam fire engines responded on the second alarm. A hose company and a steam fire engine responded on a telephone call and seventy-eight city firemen were engaged at this fire.

Report made by.

J. W. GRAHAM,
Chief Fire Department

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

(Clipping from "The Citizen," Ottawa, Canada, Thursday, July 21, 1910.)

GOVERNMENT BUILDING A FIRE MENACE—SEVERE CRITICISMS AND SOUND SUGGESTIONS—OFFICIAL REPORT TO PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT—SOME SECTIONS DESCRIBED AS FIRE TRAPS.

Fire Chief Graham has prepared his report on the fire protection appliances in the Government buildings, and has forwarded it to the deputy minister of public works. The chief has completed a thorough inspection of all the Government buildings, and his letter to the deputy contains some very strong criticisms and valuable recommendations. The conditions revealed are surprising to the general public.

He makes particular complaint of the menace from waste paper, boxes, etc., in the corridors, and refers to one place as a fire trap. Some of the extinguishers and other equipment were found to be useless and the standpipes which are outside of the buildings were discovered to be of a size that would not fit the city hose. Following are the recommendations and criticisms:—

"The House of Commons should have more chemical extinguishers. The main supplying the attic and roof is of not any service, being without water under ordinary domestic pressure. This applies to the whole of the main building.

"On the Senate side, I found a hydrant covered up with boxes and books, and in the library there are two hydrants enclosed in cupboards, and locked. To open one required five minutes before the key could be found. All hydrants and chemical extinguishers should be so placed as to be available at all times. I would also suggest that more chemical extinguishers be placed on the Senate and in the library.

"In the west block, I was told that there was always 30 pounds pressure on the mains but upon inquiry I find that this applies only to the lower floors, not the attic or roof, which are without water nearly all the time. The corridor throughout the basement, I found in very bad condition, being littered with paper, boxes, straw, etc., and also large wooden cupboards filled with surplus stock of paper. We do not permit rubbish of this kind to accumulate in any business building throughout the city. There should also be more chemical hand extinguishers placed at convenient points in the basement.

A Fire Trap.

"In the east block, the conditions are very good, with the exception of the attic and the record library in the Secretary of State's Department. This part of the building is a fire trap, and there are only a few pails half filled with water. This portion specially should be well supplied with chemical extinguishers.

"In the Langevin block, the basement could not have been in a worse condition. I found every room and corridor filled with paper and cardboard boxes. I consider this a very dangerous practice. I would suggest that if this basement is always to be utilized for storage purposes an automatic sprinkler system should be installed. There are also a number of chemical extinguishers known as Household extinguishers, that ought to be discarded at once, as they are of no use, and should be replaced by modern extinguishers.

In Other Buildings.

"In the printing bureau the equipment for fire protection is not ample enough. There should be more chemical extinguishers distributed among the different floors.

"In the Supreme Court, there is no fire equipment whatever. In the attic should be some extinguishers placed for immediate use.

"In the post office, there are no hydrants or hose, and not nearly enough chemical extinguishers.

"The conditions of the archives building is first class, and also the Royal Mint.

"Rideau Hall is well equipped with hose and hydrants, but a few more chemical extinguishers are needed throughout the hall and surrounding buildings.

Recommendations.

The Chief, in conclusion, recommends:—

“That all rooms and corridors throughout the different buildings should be kept free from all rubbish and regularly inspected; the placing of more chemical extinguishers in the different buildings and the regular inspection of the same as to their working order; that all employees be instructed as to their use and how to use them; that all hose be connected to the various hydrants and the valves regularly inspected to see that they are in proper working order; that all hose reels that are kept outside of the building be discarded as the hose has become of no use on account of being exposed to the weather; that all the twin connections that are placed around the outside of the main building be changed at once from 2¼-inch outlet to 2½-inch to suit the city fire department hose; that the fire pails be regularly inspected and kept filled with water; that there should be more hydrants placed throughout the grounds surrounding the parliament buildings, and they should be regularly inspected both winter and summer so as to be ready for immediate use.

“All corridors over one hundred feet in length should be protected by self-closing fire shutters. This precaution will minimize the rapid spread of fire horizontally. The pumps throughout the different buildings are not manned constantly. These pumps should have competent men in charge, day and night, throughout the year. All buildings owned or rented by the Government, should be connected to the city fire alarm system and the alarm boxes placed inside the building close to the watchman, an order should be given that on the first sign of fire, the alarm be given at once. A standing order should be given to the different officers of the city fire department for admittance to the various buildings at all times in case of fire.”

EXTRACT FROM FIRE DEPARTMENT 1914 ANNUAL REPORT.

Inspection have also been made of buildings occupied by the Dominion Government throughout the city, and the conditions existing in them have been greatly bettered. But the fire department has no jurisdiction over the buildings owned by the Government, and although I have recommended repeatedly, nothing has as yet been done with my recommendation, that a staff of experienced firemen from the city fire department be employed to look after these buildings, and keep the fire fighting equipment in proper shape, this is at present being looked after by the Dominion Police. I would suggest that this matter be taken up strenuously without delay, for, should a fire happen, valuable time would be lost in locating same, as these buildings are practically unknown to outsiders. Wherefore if the Government would contribute towards the maintenance of a staff of firemen, who would all be experienced men who would be supplied from the city department, and who would be replaced at intervals, thereby in time every man on the department would be thoroughly familiar with all these buildings.

(Clipping from Ottawa Evening Journal, Wednesday April 21, 1915.)

Suggestions of the Fire Chief did not please Deputy Minister.

Chief Graham denies statement that the Dominion Police generally have fire under control when firemen arrive.

Found hose locked up and caretaker absent.

Chief suggests having firemen thoroughly acquainted with every part of Government buildings.

In a letter to the Board of Control which was read at a meeting of that body yesterday afternoon, Mr. J. B. Hunter, Deputy Minister of Public Works, did not approve of the suggestion embodied in the annual report of the Ottawa fire chief that civic men be placed in the government buildings as an additional safeguard against fire.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

MR. HUNTER'S LETTER.

Mr. Hunter in his letter, says:—

“Your favour of the 6th instant, with enclosures, addressed to the Hon. the Minister of Public Works, *re* fire protection for government buildings, has been handed to me, and in reply I beg to say that the recommendation of Chief Graham of the fire department of the city of Ottawa—that a staff of the corporation firemen patrol the interior of the government buildings—has been carefully considered by the Commissioner of Dominion Police, who have a perfect knowledge of every hole and corner of these buildings and who are always on hand, and ready to show the firemen the location of a fire; and, as a matter of fact, the Dominion Police generally have the fire under control, as in the case of the Langevin block, with the hose playing upon it when the city firemen arrived.

Absolute Nonsense.

“The Commissioner of Dominion Police is of the opinion that it is absolute nonsense to assert that fires would be discovered earlier if firemen from the city fire department patrol the buildings instead of the police. It is noted that every time a fire occurs in any of the government buildings, the chief seizes the opportunity to renew his suggestion.

“A great many improvements have been made in recent years in the fire fighting and fire protection appliances in the Dominion buildings in Ottawa, and I have always found the Commissioner of the Dominion Police ready and willing to consider any suggestions in the way of equipment which the chief of the Ottawa fire department cared to offer at any time, but it does not necessarily follow that all suggestions must be adopted.

“The inauguration of a system whereby the Ottawa Fire Department would have jurisdiction over the Government buildings, and have a staff of its own paid by the Government patrol same, would, however, appear to be entirely unnecessary in view of the existing satisfactory arrangements.”

CHIEF'S REPLY.

Chief Graham indignantly refuted the assertion that the Dominion Police generally had a fire under control when the city firemen arrived on the scene.

“When I was elevated to the position of chief, I found that conditions for fire protection obtaining in the Parliament buildings were disgraceful. I spent five weeks inspecting the buildings, and I found a great deal of hose locked up in cupboards, the man with the key being nowhere to be found. I found hose 2¼ inches in size, equipped with 2½-inch couplings. I reported conditions to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, and recommended the installation of the present fire alarm system in the buildings, which was shortly afterwards installed.

“I do not know of one fire which was put out by the Dominion Police. The Ottawa fire department had the first stream on the fire in the Langevin block. The Dominion Police endeavoured to work a linen hose which burst, and was of no use in checking the blaze. I do not know anything about the police department but I can tell the Commissioner of Dominion Police something about running the fire department.

“It was my idea to have six men at the least, stationed in the Government buildings, in order that they might become familiar with every hole and corner. The men would be changed each month, and in this way all the members of the fire department would become intimate with the Parliament buildings in a short time.

“Impossible for them to become familiar with every nook and cranny in those buildings,” commented Controller Champagne.

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Matter of Precaution.

"I am making this statement as a precautionary measure, in case anything should happen, and I want the board to know that I am doing all in my power to protect those buildings, if the Government officials will only co-operate with me. Blame was attached to both Chief Provost and Chief Young in connection with the West Block fire and the Post Office fire, and I wish to preclude the possibility of any one intimating that I am not taking the proper steps to safeguard the buildings."

"At the suggestion of Controller Champagne, Chief Graham will embody the above in writing, and leave it in the hands of the City Clerk for future reference."

OTTAWA, February 16, 1916.

Pursuant to adjournment, the enquiry was continued at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

ROBERT A. PRINGLE, Esquire, K.C.; His Honour Judge DUNCAN BYRON
MACTAVISH, *Commissioners.*

W. R. WHITE, Esquire, K.C., *Counsel assisting the Commission.* ..

Mr. J. L. DEACON, curator of the reading-room, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have been sworn?—A. Yes. ..

Q. And I understand you wish to make an explanatory statement in writing?—
A. Yes.

Q. This statement you have prepared, explanatory of the rules?—A. Yes.

Q. The statement is as follows: "In my evidence given, I did not mean to infer that the rule with regard to smoking was in any way changed from that given me by the late Speaker White. I consider it still a rule, and there were five cards hung up in the reading-room to that effect. I believe that all having anything to do in the making of the rules were aware of the meaning of them, and considered them good rules."

"Mr. Speaker Sproule sent for a copy of the rules, and the card was returned unchanged."

"Some of the members objected to smoking in the room and I showed them the rules, and said 'Bring it up in the House, and whatever order is made, I will do my best to carry out.' During the recess I did not allow any one visiting the reading room to smoke, except members or ex-members."

"Had I thought I would have been upheld, I would have tried my utmost to have the rules carried out."

"On my appointment in 1891, when I reported to the late Sir John Bourinot, he told me, among other things, to have as few complaints as possible, and I have always had that in mind."

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. That statement read by Mr. White is a true statement?—A. Yes, sir.

And furthermore, witness deposeth not.

W. D. PERKINS, duly sworn, deposed:—

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are assistant in the Senate reading-room?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Do you know anything concerning this fire; you were on duty the night of this fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see any strangers in the building?—A. When I was in the reading-room about 5 to 9, it is usual for me to go to the Senate post office for mail, and in going for mail I passed the House of Commons reading room door on the way to the post office, and everything seemed quiet.

Q. Did you notice who was in there at the time?—A. No, sir, I could not see anybody in particular; there is glass in the door and I could see in.

Q. In the precincts of the House or the Senate, did you notice any suspicious strangers?—A. No.

Q. Were you there when Constables Miller and Knox were operating the extinguisher hose?—A. Yes. About the fire hose, when I went to the post office I was talking to Mr. Thorne, who was on duty in front of the Senate chamber, and there was a tremendous draught came up the corridor from the Speaker's apartment, and Mr. Thorne said, "What is that?" We both ran down, and we discovered the reading-room was on fire, and pulled the hose out of the rack, and Policemen Moore and Miller came and they were all there handling the hose. Mr. Thorne went away to get other hose, with a man named Macdonald—they thought they could reach us with another length—and when they were trying to get back the smoke was too dense.

Q. What side of the reading-room were you on?—A. The Senate side.

Q. It is said by these two policemen, Constables Moore and Miller, that one of them held the swinging door open?—A. Yes, in the early stage of the fire, one policeman held the door open.

Q. Did you see either of the policemen using a fire extinguisher?—A. None on the Senate side.

Q. Or none on the Commons side?—A. No.

Q. You speak of going down the corridor. What corridor did you go down?—A. On the east side of the Senate chamber, that is going to the Senate post office.

Q. Then you had to go across the other corridor?—A. No, the Senate post office is in front of the Senate chamber.

Q. How did the policemen seem to be acting?—A. That I am not in a position to say, because when I left the reading-room everything was in quietness.

Q. But while the fire was going on?—A. Those two policemen and myself stayed with this hose for an hour, and played on the east end of the reading room.

Q. Would that be after the city fire brigade came?—A. Yes; we were there about an hour. The city brigade had come in the meantime.

Q. Had they brought hose into the building?—A. No, sir.

Q. Were any of them bringing in any line at all into the House?—A. Yes, some time after the fire started. Afterwards the firemen came along and took the hose from the two policemen, and by then the fire had worked pretty well on the other side. Up to that time we had not seen the firemen—the only man who was assisting the policeman was Norman Wood.

Q. You saw no suspicious characters?—A. None whatever.

By Mr. Pringle:

Q. Did you see anybody—did you see any stranger?—A. In the room I was working in, the two doors there would be closed, and I would not be in a position to see anybody going through the corridors into the reading room.

Q. You would not be in a position to see anybody passing along to the House of Commons reading room?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you hear any explosions during the progress of the fire?—A. No, sir.

Q. None whatever?—A. No, sir.

And furthermore, witness deposeth not.

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CHARLES LAROSE duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are the doorkeeper of the Senate?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were in the House the evening the fire took place?—A. I did not get there until 9.30 between 9.30 and 10—I was not on duty that night.

Q. When you got there what did you see?—A. I saw that the building was doomed from the way I decided,—I knew the Senate was going, and I devoted all my efforts to saving what I could from the pictures around the corridors.

Q. Did you see anything of the firemen, and police at work?—A. Yes, when I got there the city brigade was there,—they were getting the hose through in the courtyard, between the Commons and Senate over the boiler room. They got out of the windows on the west corridor of the Chamber and got on the roof, and were playing their hose there.

Q. Did you see the Dominion police at work with the hose?—A. Yes, Policemen Moore and Miller were there—Mr. Perkins had gone into the reading room. They were using the hose on the Commons reading room from the Senate side.

Q. Is that about all you know?—A. Yes, except as to the saving of the stuff, and later on when the fire began to get into the Senate chamber.

Q. Did you hear any explosions—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

W. R. THORNE, duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a Senate messenger?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Were you on duty the night of the fire?—A. Yes, on the main lobby of the Senate when the fire broke out?

Q. That is the lobby running in front of the Chamber?—A. Yes. The fire started in the back.

Q. Did you see the fire starting?—A. No, sir, I had no idea until the gentleman employed in the reading room came rushing up badly burnt, Mr. Spencer, and I asked him what was wrong.

Q. Then did you go to the vicinity of the fire?—A. Yes, we went down, and put on the hose at the end of the chamber, that has already been spoken of.

Q. And that hose was operated by whom?—A. Five altogether, two policemen and Mr. Perkins, and Mr. Macdonald and myself.

Q. And that was operated through the door into the reading room of the Senate side?—A. Yes.

Q. Is there anything else that you know that might be of importance to us?—A. I might say: It has been sworn that the doors were locked on the Senate side, and utterly impossible for them to get the hose through, well, there was one door left open in case of emergency, that is the door leading to the elevator, and we left one open.

Q. How could any person get into the Senate lobby from the main entrance?—A. Through that door.

Q. You locked it after the fire alarm?—A. Oh, yes.

Q. But we are speaking of the period prior to the alarm of fire. It was said the constables were playing the hose through this door?—A. Yes.

Q. That was just at the time the alarm was given?—A. Within a few minutes after the keeper was chased out of the room, that hose was put on with the good stream of water.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. No, sir.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

DAVID EWART, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Something struck me in regard to the lighting of that reading room. There were electric lights on each of these desks?—A. Yes.

Q. And the wiring came up through the desks?—A. Yes, I believe it did.

Q. I do not know whether you are familiar enough with that?—A. I think you had better call the electrician on that.

Q. It just struck me that that wiring going up to the desks connecting these lights on top, whether there was any possibility of any defects in that wiring, causing fire?—A. The electrician could explain that and give you all the particulars. Recently it was all carefully gone over, and all the wires put in conduits.

Q. He would be able to say how that wiring was carried up through that desk?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. It was stated by the Chief yesterday, that an explosion took place in the vicinity of the Speaker's apartments. Did you, under instructions, examine that place where the explosion was said to have taken place?—A. No, I never heard about it.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I was informed to-day that something had been done?—A. I think you might have Mr. Thompson or Mr. Johnson, the foreman electrician, or Mr. Wilson heard on that. From them you would be sure to get the full particulars, and I think it would be very wise to do so.

Mr. WHITE, K.C.: It could hardly occur, without affecting the lights?

Mr. PRINGLE, K.C.: I quite appreciate that, but I think they could explain it.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

JOHN J. McDONALD sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a messenger in the Senate, aren't you?—A. Yes.

Q. Tell us what you saw, when did you go on duty?—A. 6.30.

Q. And you were on duty at the time of the fire.—A. Yes, when it broke out. I was in the Senate messengers' room at the time.

Q. How far is that from the reading room?—A. About 100 yards, it is downstairs as you go into the main lobby.

Q. You heard the alarm down there?—A. Yes, when the alarm went off—it was the fire alarm gong—I went upstairs, and met Mr. Spencer, and he said it was the reading room and it was all in flames, and when I got there there were Mr. Perkins and two policemen and Mr. Thorne with the hose, and I assisted them.

Q. Do you know the names of the policemen?—A. I am not sure.

Q. You were not here during the progress of the investigation?—A. No.

Q. The hose seemed to work all right?—A. Yes.

Q. And was it effective from the Senate side of the reading room?—A. Yes, there were no flames on our side.

Q. Did you hear any explosion?—A. None.

Q. You seem to have been able to see into the reading room. Where did the volume of the fire seem to be?—A. At the time I arrived, the flames were climbing up the walls on the both side, going towards the Commons side.

Q. The stream of water on the Senate side was effective to some extent?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see the flames go up?—A. Yes, they were roaring.

6-7 GEORGE V, A. 1916

Q. That was considerable time before you noticed the city fire brigade?—A. The Honourable Mr. Rogers ran across then, and enquired if we wanted firemen, and we said yes, but they would be needed on the other side, and he went right back again to the Commons.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

A. J. McMILLAN duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are caretaker in 16?—A. Yes.

Q. You were there how long?—A. Some years.

Q. And you were there the night of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. And did you notice the efforts made, or when did you first hear the alarm of fire?—A. The members came running into 16—I was sitting at my desk—they ran in from the chamber, and I could see the smoke coming into the room.

Q. Coming from the direction of the Speaker's apartments?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there any flame at that time?—A. There was considerable smoke, and you could see some light shining through the smoke.

Q. And did you see Sergt. Carroll there, and Constables Moore and Miller and Knox?—A. Yes.

Q. Any others?—A. There were three of us in 16—Dr. Steele, Mr. Ross and myself, and we were yelling for a ladder, and he got the ladder up there and took us down, that is Constable Knox, we owe our lives to him.

Q. Where was Constable Moore and Constable Miller?—A. Moore was at his post in the lobby at the House of Commons the last time I saw him—opposite the reading room.

Q. About what time would that be?—A. About one-quarter to nine.

Q. Did you see him after the fire started?—A. No.

Q. Did you see Constable Moore?—A. I did not see him either.

Q. Nor Constables Miller nor Knox?—A. There were some of them around at the outside—they were all busy, all at their posts.

Q. Have you anything else to say that would be of value to the Commission? Either with regard to the constable or others?—A. No, I think the Dominion Police were of good service.

Q. You were there I suppose when the fire started, and during the fire did you hear any explosions?—A. No.

Q. How long did you remain around there after you got out of the building?—A. Not very long, it would not be over half an hour.

Q. But during the period you were there, you heard no explosions?—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Constable T. S. MOORE recalled, deposed:—

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. In the course of investigation, there have been some opinions expressed that you rather lost your head—tell us what you have to say in regard to that?—A. I have nothing different to what I have already said, I did just as I told you.

Q. How long would you say that it took you from the time you were informed of the fire to get the extinguishers?—A. It was not half a minute.

Q. Some doubt has been expressed by some people about where the extinguisher was got, some thinking it was got outside the reading room.—A. No, sir, it was got inside the reading room, but over towards the Senate side.

Q. And when you heard the alarm of fire, you rushed through the reading room across to where the extinguisher was, and took it off the wall.—A. Yes. I notified

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Mr. Stewart before I went to the extinguisher. I called "fire" to him, he was half-way down the corridor.

Q. And it was not half a minute you say, from the time you got the alarm before you got it?—A. No, sir.

Q. At that time how could you go past where the fire was?—A. The fire was between the desks, and I ran along the corridor that runs to the Senate.

Q. You were at the door of the corridor running in the rear of the House?—A. Yes.

Q. And the extinguisher would be, where?—A. In the corner next to the door leading into the Senate corridor.

Q. When you got the alarm and you notified Mr. Stewart?—A. Yes.

Q. How far up the corridor did you go to notify him?—A. I did not go up the corridor—I just shouted to him.

Q. And when you ran back you just had to cross that corridor in front of the Cabinet Minister's and other members' room?—A. Mr. Panet's room.

Q. You passed rooms 28, 29 and 30?—A. Yes.

Q. And in the corner where we mark "X" was where the extinguisher was?—A. Yes.

Q. Then when you got the extinguisher, you came up to where the fire was?—A. Yes.

Q. You ran in between the partition and the desks?—A. Yes.

Q. And there is some dispute on a matter which seems to be pretty clear to a good many—when you speak of the fire being under the second desk, which one do you refer to?—A. That one there.

Q. That is the second desk?—A. Yes.

Q. There is quite a conflict—other witnesses say it was under desk A.—A. No, sir, it was not, because I had to run into the corridor a ways to see it—I could not see it when I just went inside.

Q. These desks are all double?—A. Yes.

Q. And there is a range of six of them?—A. Yes.

Q. When speaking of the second desk, do you mean the one half of the double desk, or do you mean the other one?—A. No, sir, I mean the second desk.

Q. And you are quite sure it was there?—A. Yes.

Q. And was the fire in more than one place at once in that room?—A. No, sir, it was not.

Q. You afterwards told us how you came across and kept the fire down on the Senate side of the reading-room fairly well?—A. Yes.

Q. When you got around and Constable Miller opened the door, while you played on the fire with the hose,—when you opened the door where was the fire, in what direction,—A. You could hardly say for smoke, but it was over next the other end.

Q. It was not near the Senate side?—A. No, when we got there first, it was not, but the smoke was very thick.

Q. Did you notice whether glass broke in the skylight?—A. Yes, it broke there while I had the extinguisher on it.

Q. Was it creating a vent for the flames?—A. Yes, when it got up above the desk the draught seemed to take in to the Commons,—it did not burn quickly until high enough for the draught to catch it, and after that it went very quickly, and it kept me guessing as to how to get out of the room ahead of it.

Q. Is there anything else?—A. I might say that in regard to those valuable minutes lost must have been lost before I was notified,—I think, Mr. Glass must have lost a lot of time himself from the time he noticed it first, before he notified me.

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By His Honour Judge MacTavish:

Q. Wasn't there an extinguisher over or nearer to you than the one you got?—A. No, sir, not much nearer.

Q. Where was it?—A. Near the smoking room outside the reading-room.

Q. And was the one you got the only one in the reading-room?—A. Yes.

Q. That is one near the Senate?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. When you first saw the fire, it was very small?—A. It was not big.

Q. How do you account for not putting it out with the extinguishers?—A. It was going on both sides of the desk, and I could not get the stream on both sides,—when I put the stream on one side, it was going ahead on the other.

Q. Didn't the fire spread to the walls with great rapidity?—A. After it got over the desks.

Q. Did you notice any fire in the newspapers along the walls, before you saw it spread?—A. No, sir.

Q. Then the hose was put on shortly after, and it was not effective in stopping the fire?—A. It did, or it would have been through the Senate quicker. Sometimes the blaze went out 6 feet through the Senate doors.

Q. You still adhere to your previous statement that the fire was at the second desk?—A. Yes, I do.

Q. And not at the first?—A. No, sir, it was not.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Constable J. E. KNOX recalled, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You said the other day, I think, that you heard no explosions? Did you subsequently hear any explosions?—A. No, none whatever.

Q. You knew the places where these men Desjardins were killed?—A. Yes.

Q. They were killed by the falling of a portion of the tower?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you there at that time?—A. Yes.

Q. Just tell us what you think took place.—A. Well, this was on the ground floor, in the basement. It was Mr. Desjardins the plumber who made the suggestion that he would go to the boiler room to bring out the engineer. He said he was still there, and would not come out for him, and we made the suggestion to go down and bring him out by compulsion. It was nearly 12 o'clock, and the flames were breaking out of the barber's shop underneath the Speaker's apartments. We were going down there, and the flames met us at the barber's shop—so we had to go back and get the hose—we attached the hose to the first stand, about ten yards down the corridor, we were standing there with the hose on this flame coming from the barber's shop when these men were killed.

Q. Did you anticipate danger?—A. No, we never thought about danger at all, because there was nothing only those flames at our end of the corridor.

Q. Did you notify the men to go back?—A. Not until I heard the first small fall.

Q. Then you did hear a fall?—A. Yes, a slight fall.

Q. When the fall took place, which resulted in the death of these men, there was a big fall?—A. Oh yes, there was a big fall when it did come down.

Q. And there was a tank that came down that created a considerable noise?—A. Yes, a great noise.

Q. Was that the only noise you heard that might be taken for an explosion during the evening?—A. Well, there was a slight explosion, but from my idea I think it was jars in the liquor storeroom, but the explosion I heard would not amount to anything at all.

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By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You did hear one?—A. Just a small one.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You located that in the direction of the liquor stores?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Were any of those fire extinguishers burnt up, or do you know whether they would explode in heat?—A. I do not know, but there was a considerable number saved.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Inspector GIROUX deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Inspector, were these extinguishers subjected to the heat of the burning building, would they explode?—A. No, there is an outlet.

Q. That is, supposing the top is open?—A. It is always open.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Examination of Constable KNOX re-opened.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

There is another statement that appears in the papers, that is about the fire starting in more than one place, my friend Chief Graham stated it started in more than one place, and says it was set,—A. Well, from my opinion, and I was there from the time the fire started, it only started in that reading room, next to the Commons, in that second desk.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

But did not the whole room become a mass of flames after it started?—A. To give an idea of the time,—the fire was in the second desk, and we had time to go up that corridor, on the Commons side and cross the main lobby on the Senate side and there was no fire at the Senate end of the reading room at that time, because we were standing in the very doors.

Q. How far had the fire got in the reading room?—A. It was all burning on the Commons side of the reading room.

Q. Then how did it spread so rapidly to the Senate side in the reading room?—A. The papers were all hanging around, and it followed them.

Q. Is it possible for anybody to say that it followed the papers, or that it burst into flame by the use of chemicals?—A. I think it followed the papers right around.

Q. And you think that these papers on the wall were not burnt because of any chemicals on them.—A. No, sir, I do not think so, because the flame got so strong on the far side, that it forced the flame towards the Senate side,—there was no flame coming out on the Senate side at all.

Q. I suppose it is hard to say how long the fire went before the whole thing was in a flame.—A. It was only a matter of three or four minutes. So far as explosions are concerned, I was there the whole time and there was nothing in the way of an explosion at all, nothing larger than one of those globes would make if it burst.

Q. I was speaking to one official who heard an explosion,—there is a difference of opinion regarding explosions, everybody seems excited?—A. I was standing at that door until forced out of by the heat, that is on the Commons side, and there was no explosion there whatever,—nor did I hear any explosion except the one small one in the basement just before the two men were killed.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Inspector H. GIROUX.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are Inspector of Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you on duty at the Parliament Buildings on the night of the fire?—

A. I arrived there about 5 after 9.

Q. How many men were on duty there that night?—A. I am not in that squad—I am in charge of the fire protection. The Sergeant-Major in charge could tell you that.

Q. Then what were your duties?—A. In the fire protection only.

Q. And what were you doing then up to the time you left; how long had you been there?—A. I came there about 9.05.

Q. Is that in consequence of an alarm?—A. Yes.

Q. And how far did you have to go to get there?—A. A ten minutes' walk, I suppose. I was notified about 9 o'clock, and I do not think I took more than five minutes.

Q. You had supervision of the fire protection in the Government buildings?—A. Yes.

Q. That is including all the Government buildings?—A. Yes, I am in full charge and responsible.

Q. And when have you made your inspection?—A. I make it every day.

Q. Did that inspection take in the fire extinguishers and hose?—A. Yes, to a certain extent. We had them discharged and recharged on the 28th December and the following day.

Q. Do you know how many of these extinguishers there were in the House of Commons?—A. 62 chemicals, and 12 fire reels.

Q. That would be 74 altogether?—A. Yes. The fire reels were used mostly for electric motors, for the elevators, and highly inflammable materials, such as gasoline.

Q. The fire reels were considered more effective?—A. Yes, on highly inflammable material. There was also in that building 3,150 feet of hose in 100-foot lengths, and a reel containing one length of 400 feet for emergency. There was one stationed at the front entrance together with firemen's axes, and all the equipment satisfactory to everybody. These fire extinguishers were all hanging up on the walls in the most conspicuous places where anybody could easily get at them. There was also, during last summer, an organization formed out of the engineers and foremen and packers and sorters, with a view to have the best means adopted to extinguish fire. I showed them how to use them, and many of them you will find in the report there assisted and understood how to do these things.

Q. That covers the whole equipment in all the public buildings?—A. Yes, it includes the destroyed building also.

Q. Were the Dominion Police there instructed also in fire drill?—A. Every one was instructed at different times, in how to use them.

Q. There had been, from time to time, incipient fires through the building?—A. Very often. Very often we put out fires that the public never knew anything about.

Q. You made a report on the 22nd April, 1915, as to the list of fires in the Government buildings of which nothing was heard, and these were all extinguished by the Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. By it, in the House of Commons, on April 3rd, 1915, you report a fire starting on the sofa in room 213, and on June 24th, 1915, another fire there—all these fires were put out by extinguishers and hose?—A. Yes.

Q. Without the assistance of outsiders?—A. Yes, without having to send in an alarm.

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Q. The system installed, the May-Oatway—that has been working satisfactory?—
A. Yes.

Q. And worked satisfactory last night?—A. Yes.

Q. There is some doubt as to how that system works?—A. It works with a sudden change of temperature; it is not necessary to have a regular temperature in the building to make it go off, but a sudden change of temperature to any temperature will make it go off. If it were 70 here, and you raised your temperature inside of 15 seconds to 100, it will go off, or if it were freezing and it were raised to 70, it would go off just the same.

Q. So it would really detect a sudden change produced by a sudden fire?—A. That is the intention.

Q. It does not require any particular temperature of heat to make it operate?—
A. No. If you raised your temperature or kept your temperature at a high degree, it would not go off, but if a sudden change it would.

Q. How many men were employed in connection with the fire protection in the House of Commons?—A. On my staff, 6 men, that is counting myself.

Q. That is outside of the Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. And how many of them would be usually on when the House was in session?—
A. They would not all be there; we have all the Government buildings to look after.

Q. Oh, they are police also?—A. Yes, police also, but there is a staff especially for that. Besides that, the police are expected to act as firemen in case of necessity.

Q. This document is copies of reports sent by you from time to time to Chief of Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

(Report marked Exhibit No. 10.)

Q. After the fire did you find any of these extinguishers?—A. Yes, right there in the building close to where the fire started. I think we have the one that was used; of course it was empty and the appearance of it was the same as when you empty a fire extinguisher. There was no foreign smell about it—just soda and sulphuric acid with which they are charged.

Q. Did you examine others that had not been discharged?—A. Yes.

Q. And how did you find them working?—A. All right.

Q. Who was present when you examined them?—A. One of the city firemen named Page, and he found it to be correct.

Q. You have also, in addition to the report Exhibit 10, you have also made personal and separate reports to the Chief of Dominion Police?—A. Yes, they are copies.

Q. These, you identify as being copies of reports made by you?—A. Yes.

(Produced as Exhibit 11.)

Q. These reports correspond to the day the fires occurred?—A. Yes.

Q. You got there at 9.05, and remained how long?—A. Till 8 o'clock next morning.

Q. When you arrived, were the city brigade working?—A. Yes, working on the Commons side inside and outside, mostly outside.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. No, sir.

Q. You were not actively engaged in connection with the fire, the city brigade took charge when they came there?—A. Yes.

Q. So really, you had no duties to perform, except as an ordinary spectator?—A. Yes, to try and save all we could.

Q. But during the time you were there, or assisting in salvage, you didn't hear any explosions?—A. None whatever

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I see by your report there have been quite a large number of fires?—A. Yes.

Q. And quite a few in the House of Commons. I notice in Room 213, on April 25, a fire extinguished by the extinguishers?—A. Yes. You will find that these reports correspond with the dates of the fire. They were written on the same day.

6-7 GEORGE V, A. 1916

Q. That of April 25, 1915, seems to be the last fire that you reported on?—A. Yes, but there may have been others, but I made no reports so far.

Q. The other reports go back over 1911?—A. Yes.

Q. Do you consider you had the most efficient system of protection possible under the circumstances?—A. I think we had a satisfactory one, except you recommend a sprinkling system.

Q. Apart from that you think everything else was done that was reasonably possible to prevent fire?—A. Yes.

Q. You think you had?—A. Yes. When it comes to the efficiency of the men I think they are as good as anybody else. Of course, when it comes to fighting a fire outside, we expect the city to assist, but we have all the necessary appliances inside. The best guaranteed guttapercha hose, all linen hose, but they are not expected to go on a steam machine, but they are of sufficient strength for the standpipes in the buildings, and pumps that will raise the water.

Q. Was the hose in good order that night?—A. Yes, they were all tested last summer, and all found to work fine.

Q. And the water pressure was good?—A. Yes, and there is a pump that starts automatically with the alarm and it kept running until after eleven o'clock any way. It puts in a good pressure of one hundred pounds or more.

Q. I suppose when you got to the fire it was pretty well on?—A. Oh, yes, it was beyond getting out as far as we were concerned.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Somebody has said you have consultations with the Chief of the city brigade in regard to taking his advice?—A. Very often we have had valuable suggestions from the Chief, which have been adopted in many cases and carried out.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You are working in harmony?—A. Yes, and we like to.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. I suppose his suggestions are generally carried out as you say?—A. Oh, yes, generally.

Q. And I suppose if either of you wanted a length of hose you would lend it to each other?—A. Oh, yes.

Q. Was any of your hose used by the city brigade that night?—A. Yes, we supplied them with hose, I think they got 3,000 feet. We have nearly 20,000 feet altogether.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. In the House you had 3,150?—A. Yes, that is what we have there.

Q. Have you anything further?—A. As far as corroborating anything said as to the charging of the fire extinguishers, I have two of my men here who can testify to it.

Q. You examined some after the fire and found them in good order?—A. Yes.

Q. And had not been tampered with?—A. No. One was put up near the smoking room, which was the closest to the constable, and if any of them had been tampered with, it should have been the one.

Q. That is next to the Members' smoking room?—A. Yes, it would be about 10 feet to the other one on the other side of the room. That one I had in my cupboard, and it is the same stuff as was put in it when charged, soda and sulphuric acid.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. As to these hose on the stands, was there any part of that building that the hose would not reach?—A. No, I do not think so.

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Q. That is, by joining one to another.—A. Yes, the hose was long enough to reach any part of the building.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

EXHIBIT No. 10.

(REPORT OF INSPECTOR GIROUX.)

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE.

OTTAWA, August 5, 1915.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police.

SIR,—I have the honour to report for your information that the installation of the fire alarm system recommended on the 26th March, 1912, by Mr. Johnson, Chief Electrician, and your Department, and again on September 24, of the same year, when asking for a supply to be put in the Estimates for its completion, has now been accomplished. A very minute inspection was performed yesterday, and to-day, in the presence of the Chief Architect, Chief Electrician, and this Branch of your Department was present also.

This testing included all detectors, manuals, hydraulic pumps, in Centre Block, East and West Blocks, Langevin and Ordnance Stores. Everything was found to work in a very effective and satisfactory manner.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE HEADQUARTERS,

OTTAWA, April 22, 1915.

Memorandum for The Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police.

Herewith please find a list of dates on which fires have occurred in the Government Buildings, of which the Ottawa Fire Department never heard anything about, and which fires were all extinguished by the Dominion Police:—

April 3, 1915.—House of Commons (Sofa.)

March 31, 1915.—West Block Yard.

December 26, 1914.—Langevin Block.

December 10, 1914.—Printing Bureau.

November 27, 1914.—East Block.

October 31, 1914.—Woods Building.

June 24, 1914.—House of Commons.

May 19, 1914.—Woods Building.

January 29, 1914.—Canadian Building.

January 29, 1914, Canadian Building.

November 26, 1913, Canadian Building.

May 28, 1913, Canadian Building.

April 25, 1913, rear entrance C.P.O., city brigade responded, but too late.

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,
OTTAWA, February 10, 1916.

Colonel A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G., etc.,
Chief Commissicner, Dominion Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to submit report showing the different buildings which, up to the present are under the supervision of this branch of your Department, also the amount of apparatus installed in each, and the dates on which they were examined and recharged:—

Buildings.	Fire Extinguishers.	Hose	Water Pails.	When Refilled.	Remarks.
		Ft.			
Archives	6	500	—	16-2-15	Examined daily.
Fisheries.	3	—	—	28-1-16	" weekly.
Birks.	16	500	—	26-11-15	" "
Canadian.	55	—	70	25-11-15	" daily.
City Post Office	23	—	20	4-2-16	" "
Temple Building.....	2	—	—	7-1-16	" monthly.
Customs Laboratory	9	—	—	20-1-16	" "
Customs Examining Warehouse	5	—	—	30-12-15	" "
Drill Hall.....	18	—	—	18-2-15	" "
Dominion Police Garage....	2	—	—	15-3-15	" daily.
East Block	48	2,100	65	25-1-16	" daily.
Experimental Farm.....	170	1,150	—	1-7-15	" weekly.
Trafalgar	10	—	—	29-11-15	" "
Post Office Garage.....	3	—	—	17-21-15	" semi-monthly.
Green House, M.H.P.....	1	—	—	18-5-15	" monthly.
Harris & Campbell.....	31	950	20	11-3-15	" weekly.
House of Commons.....	74	3,150	24	28-12-15	" daily.
Interior Department, 128 Queen st.	2	—	—	28-2-15	" monthly.
Old Imperial Bank.....	5	—	—	5-1-16	" "
Imperial Building....	20	—	—	29-1-16	" "
Inland Revenue Laboratory...	16	—	—	9-3-15	" "
Langevin Block	33	1,600	47	24-1-16	" daily.
Militia Inspection Room....	5	—	—	1-2-15	" "
Medical Stores....	5	—	—	1-12-15	" monthly.
Mines Branch	30	450	—	12-3-15	" "
Militia Survey branch.....	6	—	—	2-12-15	" weekly.
Naval Bldg.....	4	150	12	12-1-16	" "
Mounted Police.....	8	—	—	3-5-16	" "
Ordnance Stores.....	27	600	40	11-1-16	" "
Printing Bureau.....	89	1,200	30	22-3-15	" "
Rural Mail Del'y.....	1	—	—	18-2-15	" monthly.
Railway Commission.....	7	—	—	26-2-15	" "
Rideau Hall	62	1,700	—	23-4-15	" daily.
Regal Bldg.....	6	250	—	13-2-15	" "
Royal Mint.....	10	450	—	19-2-15	" "
Robinson Bldg	39	400	—	3-3-15	" "
Soper	5	—	—	28-11-15	" monthly.
Supreme Court	8	750	6	31-1-16	" weekly.
Surveyor General.....	4	—	—	12-1-16	" monthly.
Translation Building	2	—	—	3-12-15	Examined monthly.
Union Bank.....	6	—	—	19-1-16	" "
Victoria Museum.....	61	1,750	—	23-2-15	" daily.
West Block	46	1,900	60	4-3-15	" "
Woods Building.....	42	—	60	4-12-15	" "
Marine Record Room.	4	—	—	5-12-15	" monthly.
Auditor's Branch.	2	—	—	6-12-15	" "
Journal Building.....	8	400	—	5-12-16	" "
Interior Branch.....	2	—	—	15-12-15	" "
Labelle Building.....	23	500	—	10-3-15	" daily.
Booth Building.	6	—	—	6-1-16	" "
Bryson Building	8	—	—	17-6-15	" monthly.
Customs.....	3	—	—	24-3-15	" "
Conservatory Branch.	1	—	—	18-5-15	" "
Hope Building.	4	—	—	15-11-15	" "

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Buildings.	Fire Extinguishers.	Hose.	Water Pails.	When Refilled.	Remarks.
		Ft.			
Post Office Branch.....	1	—	—	9-10-15	Examined daily.
Rea Building.....	24	Sprinkling	System.	8- 2-16	" "
O. A. A. C. Building.....	3	—	—	20- 2-16	" monthly.
Militia Room.....	1	—	—	1-12-15	" daily.
Royal Bank	11	—	—	21- 7-17	" "
Carling Building.....	6	—	—	22- 7-15	" monthly.
Stephens	4	—	—	23- 7-15	" "
Dominion Warehouse.	9	—	—	8- 2-15	" "
Machinery Hall, Ex. Grounds..	18	—	—	12-11-15	" "
Mrs. Kingsmill.....	4	—	—	7- 1-16	Not visited.
Naval Store.	23	—	—	8- 2-16	Examined monthly.
Mines Branch, Testing plant..	8	—	—	9- 2-16	" "
Geodetic survey.....	8	400	—	1- 7-15	" "

In conclusion, I also beg to draw your attention to my annual summer report of having tested all the hose under our control also to my letter of May 18, 1915, on the manner, instruction and demonstration given to the messengers, packers, sorters, firemen, watchmen, and others all through the different departments on the best way to use fire extinguishers and hose so as to extinguish fires, and to my letter of August 5, 1915, advising the completion of the installation of the May-Oatway fire alarm system in the five main Government buildings.

I wish also to state that on many occasions very valuable suggestions were thankfully received from the chief of the city fire department, and many times carried out as he directed. I cannot, for the present, suggest a better fire protection in the buildings under our care, unless the department would consider the installation of a sprinkling system connected automatically with the hydraulic pumps and fire alarm system.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, May 18, 1915.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G., etc.,
Chief Commissioner, Dominion Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to report, for your information that I have completed giving instructions in the manner of using fire extinguishers and fire appliances in general, in the Government buildings, to the messengers of all departments; also the packers, elevator-men, engineers, firemen and watchmen, for the present.

I am enclosing a list showing the different departments visited. In many cases demonstrations were made with the appliances to assure a better explanation to those attending, which numbered over 300; I am also giving you the names of those I have no doubt will be of assistance in an effective manner in case of fire, thereby assuring a perfect system of fire protection in all the Government buildings at all times. These instructions will be continued at different times by this branch of the department taking in all new arrivals.

Hoping that this will be satisfactory to all concerned.

Respectfully submitted,

H. GIROUX,
Inspector.

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Harris and Campbell Building—Messengers, Workmen and others.—Ferguson, Dudley, Robbs, Aubry, Giroux, Whalen, Kennedy Normand, Chitty, King, Jenkins, Ellis, Barcelou, Rodson, Roy, Charlebois, Lepage, Whalen, Cossette, Cassi, Fortin, Rouleau, Devine, Lafortune, Mercier, Bradley, Thonar, Lemieux, Gervais, Mahon, Auger, Trudel, Tyres, Belanger, Allen, Randall, Catellier, Themlen, Jessop, Black, Hollingsworth, Bazinet, Boule, Thibault, Dube, McDonald, Smith, Pilon.

H. Lingdon, night watchman, Harris and Campbell building; J. Smith, night watchman, West Block; B. Nash, night watchman, Exchequer Court; P. Creegan, night watchman, Mines Branch; Collins, night watchman, East Block; C. Turcotte, night watchman, Egan Building; J. Symmes, day watchman, Harris and Campbell building; C. Larose, night watchman, Robinson Building; J. Burnside, night watchman, Testing Plant, Division street; J. Hack, night watchman, Victoria Island; W. B. Ralph, night watchman, Imperial Building; Lewis, elevator man, West Block; St. Jean, elevator man, East Block; Imoigg, elevator man, East Block; Lachapelle, elevator man, East Block; T. Mason, fireman, East Block; Langlais, fireman, East Block; Bannerman, fireman, East Block; Mignault, fireman, East Block.

Public Works Department, West Block—Foster, Labelle, Bray, Nicholson, Laurin, Dumoulin, Grace, Rockworth, Screen, Fahey, Louniere, Larame, McGrath, Gauthier.

Experimental Farm office building.—Brown, caretaker.

Chemical Laboratory.—Fahey, caretaker.

Geological Survey building.—Dearey, day fireman; Sharp, clerk of work; Snow, messenger.

Observatory.—Villeneuve, caretaker; Hackett, night watchman.

Governor General's Department.—John Guy.

Rideau Hall.—Lanceley, Parker, Southgate, Smith, Finch, James.

P. O'Connor, fireman, Supreme Court; Dumoulin, fireman, Post Office; Viau, elevator man, Post Office; Kurs, night watchman, Post Office; Moyneur, night watchman, Post Office; Molrooney, fireman, Printing Bureau; Bouvete, fireman, Printing Bureau; Thompson, engineer, Printing Bureau; Graham, engineer, Printing Bureau; Gillessie, caretaker, Printing Bureau; Gurling, engineer, Canadian Building; Levinne, fireman, Canadian Building; McFadden, elevator man, Canadian Building; Piche, elevator man, Canadian Building; Rioux, elevator man, East Block; Drapeau, elevator man, East Block; Haag, fireman, East Block; Timlin, fireman, East Block; Belanger, fireman, East Block; Rondeau, engineer, East Block; Palan, elevator man, Langevin Block; Brunet, elevator man, Langevin Block; Bennis, fireman, Langevin Block; McKean, fireman, Langevin Block; Wendsler, engineer, House of Commons; McDonald, engineer, House of Commons; Garispie, engineer, House of Commons; Clancey, engineer, House of Commons; Hennessey, engineer, House of Commons; Bourgeois, engineer, House of Commons; Phillips, elevator man, Robinson Building; Graham, elevator man, Mines Branch; Shackman, watchman, Mines Branch; Ogilvie, plumber, Mines Branch; Audet, fireman, archives; Trepanier, elevator man, Victoria Museum; Vogan, elevator man, Victoria Museum; Johnson, elevator man, Victoria Museum; Turney, elevator man, Victoria Museum; Rivet, fireman, Victoria Museum; Rice, fireman, Victoria Museum; Tessier, elevator man, Regal Building.

Royal Mint Messengers.—Joy, Dubois, O'Connell, Tessier, Mansell.

Archives Messengers.—Seguin, Bremner, St. Amour, Webber, Beaulieux.

Mines Branch Messengers.—Reed, Purcell, Fortune, Gravelle

Stationery Branch, Labelle Building.—Brunet, O'Meara, Verez, Roy, Constantineau, Seguin, Pelletier, St. Laurent, Blais, Lepinne, Lurch, Pelletier, J., Vincent, Doucet, Bain, Tremblay, Shore, Turgeon, Rosa.

Naval Department, Rea Building.—Bohemier, Charbonneau, Boivin.

Marine Department, Rea Building.—Charbonneau, Barcelou, Holmes, Anthoney, Wales.

Secretary of State, East Block.—Duggan, McKeay, O'Regan, Labelle, DeLage.

External Affairs, East Block.—Champagne, Lostey.

Solicitor General, East Block.—Smith

Finance Department, East Block.—Ostrom, Dixon, Beaman, Bumpras.

Auditor General, East Block.—Demarais, Coughlin, Cottee.

Privy Council, East Block.—McMillan, Burns, Mahoit, Tobar.

Justice Department, East Block.—Warner, Pickins, Trembly, Jobin.

Penitentiary Branch, Soper Building.—Hamel.

Agriculture Department, Langevin Block.—Davieu, Grazealdie, Goulet, Connouory, Dumoulin.

Post Office Department, Langevin Block.—Fanning, Moquin, Wempers, Snowdon, McRostrie, Daoust.

Interior Department, Langevin Block.—Charon, Chevrier, Groulx, Malette, Lyon, Groves, Holtz, Walters, Gibson.

House of Commons, Centre Block.—Connolly, Boudrault, Fortier, Ebbs.

Senate.—Morin, Collison, Carleton, Chas., Perkins, Gilmour, Choquette, Carleton, Jos.

Library.—Desloges, Pigeon.

Robinson Building.—Tases, Stewart, Rice, Scrim, McKenna.

Customs Department, West Block.—McGladray, Paterson, Law, Jacques, Rutle.

Trade and Commerce, West Block.—Parker, Haughton, Wright.

Inland Revenue, West Block.—Dennisson, Bourgeois, Deroches, Roy.

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Supreme Court.—Seoyer, O'Meara, Fontaine, Morse, Roy.

Railways and Canals, West Block.—Smith, Grazealdie, Pelletier, Elliott.

Militia.—Sergt. Fretwell, Sergt. Mockford, Sergt. Flinn, Sergt. Raymond, Sergt. Batman.

Post Office Messengers and Packers.—Tourangeau, McBride, Dore, Armstrong, Rochon, Boyce, Beauchamp, Chartrand, Hordnage, Barton, Dumoulin, Ferguson, Bound, Ketchum, Befoe, Earl, St. George, Dunn.

Trafalgar Building.—Gibson, Daoust.

Regal Building.—Bumps, Lacelles, William, Carron, Bulkly, Tessier, elevator man.

Printing Messengers, Packers, and others.—Sarazin, Cain, Leaney, Beaman, McCarthy, Benoit, Rochon, White, Vezina, Spinard, Daoust, Dunn, Sheppard, Desjardins, Valiquette, Bouvrette, and about seventy-five others at the demonstration.

Canadian Building.—Connolly, Gagnon, Lockman, Power, Deltor, Connolly, Curran, Thomas, Usher, Hickson.

EXHIBIT No. 11.

(REPORT OF INSPECTOR GIROUX.)

OTTAWA, April 25, 1915.

The Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg to report, for your information that during the night of Saturday, a fire started on a sofa in room 213, House of Commons. It was extinguished by using one fire extinguisher. No damage to the building.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, March 1, 1915.

Memorandum for the Chief Commissioner of Police.

The constable examining the different buildings yesterday reports that he found a fire burning in West block yard among the ashes and other rubbish. He extinguished it by using one length of the large hose. Also, that the waste paper box, at the Victoria Museum, is again overfilled, and as much on the floor about it.

INSPECTOR.

OTTAWA, December 26, 1914.

The Chief Commissioner of Police.

SIR,—I beg to report for your information that about 11.45 a.m., a fire started in one of the small rooms between the two lavatories, ground floor, Langevin block, used by some of the Char staff, to keep their mops and other rubbish. It was extinguished by the constable on duty, using three fire extinguishers. No damage.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, November 2, 1914.

The Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I have the honour to report for your information that on October 30, at 8.35 a.m., a fire started in the Robinson building, at the foot of the rear elevator, a place kept there by the Post Office Department for the purpose of storing all kinds of material, such as old mail bags, linen for bags, and also other rubbish.

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I have had the honour on several other occasions, to report that the place was a fire hole, and in case a fire did start, it would be almost impossible to check it, as the place was too congested with the above mentioned articles to get through. The fire gained considerable headway in this case on that account. Two of our May-Oatway fire extinguishers, Nos. 1 and 6 were destroyed, and the upper part of the room in question was badly scorched.

The elevator man, who saw the fire first, says that his impression is that piles of oily and greasy bags up against the hot pipes might have caused spontaneous combustion, starting the fire. The Ottawa fire brigade responded.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE HEADQUARTERS,

OTTAWA, November 27, 1914.

Lt.-Col. SHERWOOD,

Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg to report that a small fire started in between the two walls at the northwest corner of the East block, basement, at 9 this a.m.

It was extinguished by our men in a few moments, using four fire extinguishers and two lengths of hose. No damage.

It is surmised that some of the workmen threw a match or cigarette in among the shavings.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, November 2, 1914.

The Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg to report for your information that a small fire started on Saturday, October 31, in the wooden box kept at the rear of the Woods building for rubbish. The constables on duty extinguished it, with two pails of water. No damage.

I had the honour to report to you on the 19th of May last, the same carelessness from those responsible, stating then that it was not the first time that this had happened, and that it might be the cause of more serious consequences. Therefore. I think it advisable that the Public Works Department should replace the wooden box with an iron one, so as to prevent more serious results in future.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE.

OTTAWA, May 19, 1915.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,

Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg to report for your information that a small fire started in a wooden box, in the rear of the Woods building this morning, it is surmised through the carelessness of someone who put burning ashes therein, as we found coal after it was extinguished.

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As this is not the first time that the same thing has happened, and that it might turn out to cause more damage, I beg to ask that those in charge of the cleaning staff to be more careful in future.

Very little damage was done this time, except the scorching of the inside of the box. It was put out with one fire extinguisher.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, June 24, 1914.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police.

SIR,—I beg to report for your information, that at about 2.30 p.m., a gasoline lamp exploded and caught fire in one of the rooms used by the electricians in the Centre block. The fire was immediately extinguished by the workmen in the room in question, using two chemical and one pyrene fire extinguishers. During the excitement someone sounded the alarm, part of the fire brigade responded, but they were not required. No damage, except the scorching of the bench on which the lamp stood.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, January 29, 1914.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police.

SIR,—I have the honour to report that fire started in the waste paper box, at the rear of the Canadian building, at 8.30 this morning, scorching the inside of the box some, but no other damage. It was extinguished by the elevator man and constable on duty, using four fire extinguishers and a couple of pails of water.

Respectfully submitted,

INSPECTOR.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, November 26, 1913.

The Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa, Ont.

SIR,—I beg leave to report that a small fire started in a waste and rubbish box at the rear of the Canadian building during the night. It was found by the constable on duty, who extinguished it, using two fire extinguishers. The box in question contained rags and oil, and it is suggested that the fire started by spontaneous combustion. No damage, except the wooden box was scorched on the inside.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT.

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DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, June 13, 1913.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
 Chief Commissioner of Police.
 Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg leave to report for your information that at about 10 a.m., a fire started in the basement at the Woods building, in the waste paper, which is thrown in a wooden inclosure under stairway, P. G. Maloney who was on duty there at the time went down with two fire extinguishers to put it out. During that time someone phoned for the city fire brigade. I am informed that it was almost out when the chemical automobile arrived with four men, and they brought one of their extinguishers also into play. No damage done.

It would be advisable if more galvanized iron waste paper receptacles were provided for all the Government buildings, and do away with the wooden ones, or have all waste paper put outside when taken up in the mornings, where the men who gather up this paper could get it without coming into the buildings.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT.

DOMINION POLICE OFFICE,

OTTAWA, May 28, 1913.

Lt.-Col. A. P. SHERWOOD,
 Chief Commissioner of Police,
 Ottawa, Ont.

SIR,—I beg leave to report that a small fire started in Mr. Fortier's room, Immigration Department, Canadian building, by someone dropping a match in among the towels. It was extinguished without causing any damage.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT.

OTTAWA, April 26, 1913.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
 Chief Commissioner of Police,
 Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg leave to inform you that at about 11.45 p.m. yesterday a fire started in the rear entrance of the City Post Office. It is surmised by someone carelessly throwing a lighted cigar or lighted match in the waste paper about the place. When I arrived, I found the fire extinguished. The fire brigade had returned, and I was informed that the fire was out when they arrived. A cabman named Frank Vezina claimed that he put the fire out with one of our extinguishers. The damage is very slight. A couple of small wooden boxes and a cupboard was scorched. I think that the whole damage should not amount to more than \$10.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

OTTAWA, February 3, 1913.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa, Ont.

SIR,—I have the honour to report for your information that on Friday, January 31st, a small fire took place in the West block, Marine Department. It was extinguished by some of the clerks, using one of the fire extinguishers. No damage.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT.

OTTAWA, November 7, 1911.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg leave to report for your information that a small fire was discovered in coal bin, in subway between the Woods and Canadian buildings at 12.05 this a.m. P. C. Desjardins notified me, and with the assistance of P. C.'s Robinson, Desjardins and Charron P. we extinguished it with a few pails of water. I left the building at 1.30 a.m., everything then being O.K.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT IN CHARGE OF FIRE DEPT.

OTTAWA, October 16, 1911.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa.

SIR,—I beg leave to report for your information, that about 1.30 p.m. yesterday, Sergeant Guy, Governor General's Orderly, informed the Constable on duty at the East block (P. C. Lepage) that there was a fire in the yard at the rear of the East block. Acting Sergeant Littlefield was at once notified and he, with the assistance of Acting P. C. Trewhitt extinguished it, using two lengths of the big hose. No damage.

It is surmised that the fire was started through the carelessness of some one throwing burning ashes against the wood there. The ashes are piled in amongst the wood, rendering the place very dangerous for fire. It should be attended to.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT IN CHARGE FIRE DEPT.

OTTAWA, September 28, 1911.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa,

SIR,—On the 18th September, a small fire started through the electric wiring in front hall at Rideau Hall. It was extinguished by the constable on duty there, who used one fire extinguisher. There was no damage done. The police reported the matter and it was entered on the sergeant's report sheet. I verbally reported the matter to

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Inspector Hogan on the morning of the 19th instant, who said that it was sufficient and that he would give you the necessary explanation.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT IN CHARGE FIRE DEPT.

OTTAWA, September 16, 1911.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa,

SIR,—I beg to report for your information as follows: The firemen at the Langevin block discovered smoke in the basement of the building. They at once notified the constable on duty, who in turn notified me by telephone. I set off with all dispatch and with the assistance of Constable Austin (on duty there) and Constables Maskell and Trewhitt, were able to locate the fire and extinguish same. We had to use three fire extinguishers and the big hose. To locate the fire, I found it necessary on account of the denseness of the smoke, to break two windows in the room where the fire was. From appearances it would seem that the fire originated from lighted matches carelessly thrown down.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT IN CHARGE FIRE DEPT.

OTTAWA, September 27, 1911.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa,

SIR,—I beg leave to report that a fire started in the waste-paper box at the Woods building (Militia side) and was extinguished by the constable on duty there, and the sentry at the door. They used five fire extinguishers. No damage. I wish to draw your attention to the extra accumulation of waste paper, in waste-paper vault at the East block.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT IN CHARGE FIRE DEPT.

OTTAWA, October 4, 1912.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, C.M.G.,
Chief Commissioner of Police,
Ottawa,

SIR,—I beg leave to report, for your information, that at 9.10 p.m. last night, a fire was discovered in East block yard by the constable on duty outside, who immediately informed the sergeant in charge. He, with the assistance of some of the police fire brigade extinguished it, being all over at 9.35 p.m. It is surmised that it started from the fire being left in one of the sheds owned and used by the contractors, Messrs. Devlin & Doran. No damage done to Government property.

Respectfully submitted,

SERGEANT IN CHARGE FIRE DEPT.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

ROBERT H. GRAHAM, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a constable employed under the last witness in connection with the fire protection of the building?—A. Yes.

Q. When were the extinguishers in the vicinity of the reading room last charged?—A. On the 28th and 29th of December.

Q. There was a general re-charging during those two days?—A. Yes, we were pretty nearly three days altogether.

Q. Have you seen any of the extinguishers since?—A. Yes.

Q. In what condition are they?—A. Some are burned very badly.

Q. But as to their efficiency?—A. Yes, on Tuesday about 15 of them and they worked all well.

Q. Did you test them on fires?—A. No.

Q. Just to see that they were working well—you would have been able to detect if any foreign substance in them?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

W. H. TREPANIER, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You heard the statement of the last witness and also the statement of the Inspector as to the re-charging of the extinguishers?—A. Yes.

Q. And do you agree with him that they were all re-charged on December 28?—A. The 28th and 29th December, 1915.

Q. And have you seen any since the fire?—A. Yes, we took some out of the fire in good condition—others were burnt—but those we discharged discharged fined.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Captain JOHN BRADLEY, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are employed in the City Fire Brigade under Chief Graham?—A. Yes.

Q. The question is in regard to the hearing of the explosions on the night of the fire?—A. Yes, I heard some of the explosions.

Q. About where?—A. Back of the chimney.

Q. Where?—A. We were on the roof of the Library, and there were six or seven of us there and I heard three or four explosions or perhaps four or five.

Q. What would they be like—like the bursting of window glass?—A. Not like that, nor even like falling walls.

Q. Were they very loud?—A. One or two were.

Q. But the others were not?—A. No.

Q. About what time did you get up there in that position?—A. It was about a quarter past ten or a quarter to eleven.

Q. What position were you in regard to where it came from? How close would be your post when you heard the explosion, to the reading-room?—A. Perhaps 100 feet.

Q. You were on the roof?—A. Yes.

Q. That would be in the direction of the Speaker's apartment?—A. Yes, between the Speaker's apartment and the Library.

Q. Where were the explosions—where did you locate them, or did you try to?—A. We did not think much of them then, but some person passed a remark about the explosions, and until this investigation I pretty near forgot all about them.

Q. In what direction did they take place?—A. Just about where the hottest part of the fire was—about the reading-room.

Q. And you did not hear them until after eleven o'clock?—A. I could not say exactly—I was off that night, but I reported at the fire at 9.30.

Q. But you did not hear them until you were on top of the roof, and you did not get there until about a quarter to 11?—A. About that.

Q. That would be about an hour and three-quarters after you started?—A. Yes.

Q. Did they come quickly one after the other?—A. Perhaps five or ten minutes elapsed between each one.

Q. And they all appeared to be in the same place and in the same direction?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you a branch-man?—A. Yes.

Q. And I suppose you were making the most effective fight that your company could do, and at the time no remark was made about the explosions?—A. There was one at the time, but I do not know who it was.

Q. But it did not attract particular attention?—A. Not much—of course we were busy and then there were so many walls falling, but I did not think it had the same sound as a falling wall.

Q. That, of course, is your opinion, but it was a noise of some kind.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. There is no question that there was an explosion, to your mind, and not a falling wall?—A. I could not say whether it was an explosion at all.

Q. What did it sound like?—A. It was not a rumbling noise like a wall falling or smoke getting out.

Q. What is your best opinion as to what caused the sound?—A. I have no idea.

Q. Have you heard the sound caused by chemical explosions?—A. Yes.

Q. Powder explosions?—A. Yes.

Q. Did it resemble a powder explosion?—A. I could not say—not exactly like a powder explosion.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Then are you in a position to say whether it was an explosion at all?—A. I could not say anything sure as to that.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. In this report of the fire in Toronto the papers say there were a series of explosions.

Mr. WHITE: That might occur through liquors.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. When you heard the noise you saw no belching up of flame from it?—A. No.

Q. It did not alter the even contour of the fire?—A. No, sir.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

LIEUTENANT WILLIAM DICKS, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have heard the last witness, Captain Bradley? What do you say in regard to his evidence?—A. I believe it was I that called his attention and to those on the roof that there was an explosion.

Q. You were there working with him at the time and trying to keep the fire in the direction of the reading-room?—A. Our efforts were to keep it from the Library.

Q. And what you heard you characterized as an explosion?—A. Yes, I can distinctly recollect hearing four or five.

Q. And you agree with him that they were in the direction of the reading-room?—A. I am not familiar with the direction of any room, but it appeared in the hottest part of the fire behind the tower. I was on the roof between the reading-room and the

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Library and was playing on the fire that started between the two roofs going to the Library.

Q. It was all the one roof?—A. Yes, with the exception of the skylight.

Q. Was it broken?—A. Yes, and we were playing our hose through it.

Q. In what direction did you hear the explosion?—A. It appeared to me in the hottest part of the fire behind the main tower. It was in the central portion of the building.

Q. That is straight in that direction?—A. Practically straight in the direction of the clock tower.

Q. It is in a straight line south of the Library and the Commons to the West and the reading-room quite close to where you were?—A. Yes.

Q. Well, was the explosion in that part?—A. It might have been there or a little further forward—most likely more forward towards the clock tower or the centre of the main building.

Q. The other witness particularly says he did not pay much attention to it—you did not notice any burst of flame or smoke as a result of the explosion?—A. Well no, nothing more than a considerable shower of sparks which were raised in that part, but I do not think I could say there was.

Q. I presume the whole place there was on fire and you were trying to save the Library—there would naturally be falling timbers and sparks raising and then the burning building would produce quite a volume of flame and smoke.

Q. When you heard the explosion was it accompanied by any extra shooting up of flame or smoke at that time?—A. I could not say that.

Q. Would you be prepared to say it was an explosion of any chemical or powder?—A. I would not say powder alone, because an explosion from powder is more of a dull thud—this was more of a sharp crack.

Q. Was it the kind of a sound with which you are familiar or have you any experience in that sort of thing?—A. Yes, I have been under shell fire from field guns, and you could say it was something similar to that, as it was a sharp crack. It was not a dull thud that would accompany powder or dynamite. The force seemed an upward drive.

Q. But whatever it was you noticed no effect in the way of extra shooting up of flames?—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

EDGAR STANSFIELD, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Are you familiar with thermite?—A. Yes, I had an experience with it in 1901.

Q. It is a chemical used very largely for explosives?—A. I have no experience with it as to explosives, but I know it is used for welding street car rails.

Q. I understand it has been used during the present war in the form of a pastile or disc that comprises thermite and explodes and causes fire?—A. It is quite possible, but I have had no experience with it in that regard.

Q. It is said it was used by the Germans in Belgium—my attention is drawn to it by an article received from a newspaper sent to His Honour Judge MacTavish. The article or letter in the paper, in part says: "The incendiary pastile or disc is a compressed 'thermite' placed in the centre of a crown of phosphorus materials, breaking into flame at the slightest shock or friction?"—A. It would require a high temperature—it would be the phosphorus that would go off with friction.

Q. "The crown that takes fire following the combustion of the thermite, then by the raised temperature obtained by this combination, this reaction kindles, precipitates and propigates the fire"—You have not made any tests as to that?—A. I have

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heard of it going off on several occasions with intense heat. It would bring cast-iron to a liquid condition with heat.

Q. Could it be placed in a building without much difficulty so that once it reached a certain heat it would be almost impossible to stop the fire?—A. It would just give out an extra heat in that one spot—it would be local in its action. Wherever it was it would go off with intense heat.

Q. Supposing a man went into the reading room and put some there and went out again, once it started it would be almost impossible to stop the fire?—A. I think he would have to lay a continuous trail of the mixture.

Q. Why would that be when they can manufacture these pastiles which can be placed separately?—A. If each pastile had its phosphorus fuse?

Q. Yes, what is the difficulty in placing those around a reading room?—A. Yes, that would be correct—if each pastile had its separate fuse when the temperature was raised it would result in each one going off separately.

Q. It is said these discs were the sort of things used on ships that were destroyed?—A. Yes.

Q. However, you say it would be quite possible to put these pastiles in different parts of the building and once the fire started from them it is a fire that is hard to extinguish?—A. Yes, the pastile itself would be very hard to extinguish, but any fire that would be caused separately would be the same as any other fire.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. A pastile here would cause more heat when it took fire?—A. Yes.

Q. But if nothing there combustible to feed the fire the heat would diminish and a fire twenty feet away would have no greater heat than the ordinary fire?—A. That is it.

Q. And to generate a fire that could not be extinguished these pastiles would have to be scattered over different portions of the room?—A. Yes. But it requires intense heat to discharge them—it says in that letter that it was set off by fuse.

Q. Yes, but it develops by a terrific heat when it goes off?—A. Yes.

Q. But that is connected to something which causes combustion, and getting away from it the heat would not be any greater twenty feet away than if generated by some other cause?—A. That is it.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. But still this pastile would continue to burn?—A. The pastile would be burnt up almost immediately.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

W. J. LALONDE, duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are connected with the fire alarm system for the city?—A. Yes.

Q. What time did the fire alarm sound on the night of the fire?—A. At three minutes to nine.

Q. Were you on duty that night?—A. No.

Q. But you have a record?—A. Yes, we have a record of every alarm that comes in—the minute we do not mark the half minute, but every minute.

Q. Is there a second alarm recorded?—A. Yes, at five minutes after nine—eight minutes after the first.

Q. And that second one is a general alarm?—A. No, there is one that brings out everything.

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Q. What did the second alarm bring out?—A. It takes in everything west except No. 11.

Q. It covered a certain district?—A. Yes.

Q. But the third alarm was not sounded?—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

A. K. MACLEAN, M.P. (Halifax), sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You might tell us in your own words your experience that evening?—A. I think the newspaper report you are looking over there was to the effect that I made the remark that it was not an ordinary fire. I do not know as I made the remark to a newspaper, but I have no doubt that I made the remark, and it was not an ordinary fire in any sense. I may have suggested in my judgment that night that it was due to incendiarism, but after all that would be only a matter of opinion, and that is for the Court to determine. I was in the Chamber when the alarm was given, and Hon. Mr. Hazen and myself were the last to leave it excepting Mr. Nesbitt and Mr. Clark, and we were driven back, but we had no great difficulty in getting out—we went out by the southwest corner exit.

Q. What gave you the idea it was not an ordinary fire?—A. Well, I was very leisurely leaving the Chamber, and I noticed a flame through the window at the top of the door behind the Sergeant-at-Arms, and I concluded it was a fire proceeding very rapidly—it was not ordinary as to speed at least, and the rapidity with which the flames spread was a conspicuous part of the whole thing.

Q. You are familiar with the place in which the fire is said to have originated?—A. Yes.

Q. And you know the amount of inflammable material there?—A. Yes, although I do not look upon newspapers as necessarily inflammable—I have found it difficult to burn papers.

Q. On the flat perhaps, but papers hanging on a wall loose?—A. They would certainly burn rapidly.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. This fire is stated to have started in a paper lying flat?—A. Well, it should have been stopped if it was.

Q. It is pretty hard to criticise?—A. I would not criticise—perhaps I should say it is a pity it was not stopped.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The point is, here is a room containing papers hanging on the wall and this partition extending along close to the desks?—A. I would say this, that every condition and every circumstance lent itself to a rapidly spreading fire. That perhaps covers what you mean?

Q. Yes, and did you at any time during the evening hear any explosions?—A. No, I did not—they might have occurred but I did not hear any. I went up to the third floor, to the Nova Scotia members room to see if anybody was there and I got back quite comfortably. I went up by the stairway and it took less than a minute and a half.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.

Q. Did you see anything of Mr. Law?—A. No, I saw smoke on the second floor, but the lights were all on.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

LOUIS P. GODKIN, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.

Q. You are sergeant-major in the Dominion Police?—A. Yes.

Q. What are your duties?—A. General supervision of the detailing of men inside and outside the Buildings.

Q. On the basement floor how many men had you detailed on duty? That is in the House of Commons, inside?—A. Seven men inside in uniform and a sergeant and a plain-clothes man.

Q. That would be seven men counting the sergeant and eight with the plain-clothes man?—A. Yes.

Q. That was the usual number?—A. Yes, the usual number since the session.

Q. There was only one plain-clothes man that night?—A. Yes—Constable Knox, but that duty was left to the jurisdiction of Sergt. Carroll of the House of Commons.

Q. It appears two men were on that night?—A. There are two at times but I am mostly sure there was one that night.

Q. You had men outside too?—A. Yes.

Q. Have you men at the main entrance?—A. Yes, from eight to eight—twenty-four hours.

Q. Always somebody at the main entrance?—A. During the session, yes.

Q. And that was in force that evening?—A. Yes.

Q. Have you anything to do with the fire prevention?—A. To a certain extent—all our men are instructed.

Q. Were you present when Inspector Giroux gave his evidence?—A. I was.

Q. Can you speak of the facts given by him with regard to the precaution and training of men and the number of extinguishers and amount of hose?—A. No.

Q. Well, what was your idea in regard to that?—A. There was always plenty of protection against fire, that was left to Inspector Giroux to do.

Q. Were you here yesterday when Dr. Sproule was examined?—A. I was.

Q. Did you hear his statement as to the careless manner on some occasions that the police guarded the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. What do you say as to that?—A. I say he must have made a mistake as regards not meeting any constables around those buildings.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I do not see much necessity going into this, I do not think it will lead us to the origin of the fire.

WITNESS: I would like to show the number of men we had last year and this year inside and outside the buildings.

MR. PRINGLE: What we are interested in particularly is the number of men at the time of the fire, and any difference of opinion between you and the ex-Speaker of the House of Commons will not assist us in finding the origin of this fire.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Then on the night of the fire what is your opinion as to whether sufficient men there to protect the building?—A. Inside?

Q. Yes?—A. That was left to the Sergeant-at-Arms himself. We give him all the men he wants, we only loan our men to the Sergeant-at-Arms for that purpose, and whatever men he asks we give them to him, and that was with himself.

Q. Then you supplied all the authorities of the House asked for?—A. Yes, and more so.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

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Chief GRAHAM, recalled, deposed:

With reference to these explosions I would like a statement from Major Stetham who is now in Halifax. It seems very few people heard them, but I know they occurred. Major Stetham was with me quite a while that night, and also our Water Works Engineer, Mr. Haycock—he heard those explosions.

Mr. PRINGLE: We will be sitting Tuesday and Wednesday next and anybody you suggest we will have them subpoenaed. I do not know whether it is of sufficient importance to bring Major Stetham here.

Mr. WHITE: There are some who heard them and some did not. One man might hear it, but it was not sufficient to accelerate the flames or smoke. It is a matter whether you consider it of sufficient importance to put in any more evidence on that.

Mr. PRINGLE: The man who hears deserves more consideration than the man who does not hear.

Mr. WHITE: I agree with that, but here you have both sides.

Mr. PRINGLE: It is only very important in one view of the case—if certain evidence came forward to show it was the work of an incendiary the fact of the explosion might be corroborative of it.

Mr. WHITE: It would be important if an explosion in the immediate vicinity of where the fire was set and of such a character as discernible by the eye as well as the ear because any noise in that building could be interpreted honestly to be one thing or the other.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I do not know whether there is anything in this or not, but a reputable gentleman has said he had seen certain portions of the stone pretty well out from the building and he could not believe they could have got in that position only by the falling of a wall?—A. Yes, that is what I tried to explain yesterday—in the court yard, and I am pretty sure Major Stetham was with me—we were placing a deluge stream there and this wall came down and the stones were thrown against the opposite side of the court yard, and a large stone thrown out into the passageway.

Q. Would that likely have been thrown there by the falling wall?—A. No, it is not a great height.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Would not it depend on the internal construction of that building—supposing iron girders in that building the heat might make them bulge and twist around?—A. Of course, an iron girder would twist around.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

The inquiry was thereupon adjourned until Tuesday, February 22, 1916, at 10.30 a.m.

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OTTAWA, February 22, 1916.

Pursuant to adjournment the Commission resumed its investigation at the City Hall Chamber at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

R. A. PRINGLE, Esq., K.C.,	} Commissioners.
His Honour Judge DUNCAN BYRON MACTAVISH,	

W. R. WHITE, K.C., *Counsel to the Commission.*

WILLIAM ANDREW CHARLTON, M.P.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Were you at the House that evening?—A. Yes, but not in the chamber. I was in my room the first floor up.

Q. In the old part of the building?—A. Yes.

Q. Just over the telegraph office?—A. Yes.

Q. When did you hear the alarm of fire?—A. I think about a quarter to nine or five to nine.

Q. And just tell the Commission as far as you know what you noticed that evening which would have any bearing on the inquiry?—A. There were six members of us in that room and Mr. Proulx and myself were the only two at that time. It is No. 115, just between the Solicitor General's and the Minister of Labour—we heard a great noise in the corridor and he ran and opened the door and saw them running with hose and he said there is a fire—he seemed very excited. I told him not to get excited and to put his hat on and I put on my hat and coat and was taking some papers off my desk and putting them into a letter file and I found directly I had not any more time to stay—the room was filled with smoke and I went out. Those winding stairs come up immediately opposite—that is near the post office. I could not go down there for the smoke in that part of the building and I went down the new part of the building into the basement. I knew the building pretty well and knew where I was.

Q. What stair did you go down?—A. I am not sure whether the back elevator or another elevator.

Q. The twin elevator?—A. Yes, however, I went to the basement and followed the passage along until I got to the messengers' room. Mr. Hazen was standing there and he said "Charlton, Burrell is very badly burned," and Mr. Burrell was sitting there with his face and hands quite red. I said, "Can I do anything," and he said no Dr. Chisholm was there. Just as I got outside Dr. Flint fell down beside me and we got him away.

Q. That is Dr. Flint of the House?—A. Yes, I did not know who it was at the time but I found out next day who it was.

Q. You had been familiar with the reading-room?—A. Yes.

Q. And you know the inflammable character of the contents?—A. Yes, in fact I made an investigation of it the first year I came to Parliament and I always hung my coat up in my room afterwards.

Q. The place was filled with hanging papers and the wood varnished pine and it would go off?—A. Not all hanging papers.

Q. But some, and some on the shelves underneath?—A. Yes.

Q. If a fire started there would you expect it to spread pretty rapidly?—A. As fast as you could run, I think—all paint.

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Q. I suppose the same would apply to the Members' lockers along the corridor?—
A. Yes, they are all the same.

Q. You know of no other fact which would be of benefit to us in pursuing this inquiry?—A. No, I do not know as I do. Not just with the immediate cause of fire. You were not asking for opinions I suppose.

Q. The object is to get the facts—did you hear any explosion?—A. No, sir.

Q. How long did you remain in the building?—A. I went outside at once.

Q. And you remained around after the fire how long?—A. About half an hour.

Q. And during that period you heard no explosions?—A. No, sir.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. The fire evidently spread with great rapidity?—A. Yes, wonderful, I have seen other buildings erected like that and they go off like a powder magazine.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. A great deal due to the many coats of varnish?—A. Yes. And dry wood that has been there for about 50 years.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

EDGAR N. RHODES, M.P., sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are Deputy Speaker of the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. And on the evening of the fire you were sitting in the Speaker's chair?—A. Yes.

Q. Tell us in your own words what you know of the fire?—A. Do you wish any reference to time at all?

Q. Yes, as nearly as you can?—A. Well, the fire as nearly as I can make out would occur between ten and five minutes to nine.

Q. Who gave the alarm?—A. The only alarm I heard was given by Mr. Glass.

Q. From which door?—A. He entered the door immediately opposite the Speaker's chair. Everything was calm and normal in the Chamber—I noticed a slight commotion in the hall and a second after the door opened and Mr. Glass came in and I knew something unusual was up by the expression of his face, so much so that my eyes were rivetted on his face. He called out 'Mr. Speaker the building is on fire' I do not think the words left his lips before the corridor immediately behind him was filled with thick smoke and sheets of flame were interspersed through these black clouds and the smoke curled into the Chamber immediately behind Mr. Glass. I cannot describe how quickly the Chamber was apparently filled with smoke, but it was very quickly.

Q. The ventilator fans were working?—A. I have no knowledge as to that.

Q. But they naturally would be when the House is in session?—A. I cannot say as to that.

Q. And then?—A. My recollection was that on the cry of "fire" and the approach of the smoke everyone in the Chamber and galleries arose—I remember the galleries particularly because only a second before I had been counting the people in the gallery and remarked on the smallness of the number. And I saw them rise with the rest and it appears to me everybody started for an exit. I know that is what I did.

Q. By what door did you leave the Chamber?—A. By the door in rear of the Speaker's chair. I know there were a number of members ahead of me and my recollection is fairly clear that the late Mr. Plante was behind me—I remember the swish of the black gown. And proceeding along the corridor towards the Post Office I went through the door before you come to the telegraph office and took those stairs there and went up to my office to get my coat and some personal possessions and I was in my room perhaps a minute, sufficiently long to put on my coat and gloves and get my

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bat and opened the drawers of my desk and looked in and came out and when I came out the hall was a cloud of smoke then, so much so that one of the Dominion Policemen standing at the corner said it was impossible to get along the upper corridor running longitudinally east of the building and I went down the winding stairs and found my way into the messengers' room in the basement.

Q. Do you know who the other people were around?—A. Yes, I remember distinctly seeing a good many. Mr. Nesbitt came down either at the moment or within a few seconds of the time I came down. I remember well for I remember his condition and I suggested to him forcibly that he should go outside. He wanted to go into the Chamber again as he had an idea there were some members there. The first man I saw downstairs was the doorkeeper of the upper gallery, and owing to the quickness of the fire I asked him if the galleries were cleared and he said: yes, that he had not left the door until everybody was out. Then I saw Mr. Nesbitt and the clerk, Dr. Flint, and Mr. Burrill and a number of others.

Q. They were all in the basement?—A. Yes.

Q. When you came out of that western corridor, making your way downstairs, did you notice flame or smoke in the eastern corridor?—A. I did not look there but I went into the corridor at the rear of the Speaker's chair—there was smoke there when I went out, but in no great volume.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. From seven to ten minutes after the fire was first announced in the Chamber, I heard two detonations perhaps it would not be correct to term them explosions, but mild explosions, sounds which I have heard in fires before—they would not indicate anything unusual.

Q. Superheated air bursting a door?—A. Yes, something like that, or the falling of a wall or the ceiling of the Chamber of heavy glass and falling a distance on those desks it would make quite a noise.

Q. How long did you remain in the vicinity of the building after getting out?—A. About half an hour.

Q. Did you hear any during that period?—A. No, only those two, and that would be ten minutes after the commencement. But I heard no explosions at the time of the announcement of the fire or immediately after.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

M. C. MACCORMAC, sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What is your position?—A. One of the clerks of the Library of Parliament.

Q. And you were present on duty the night of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Be kind enough to tell us about it?—A. I went on duty a little before eight, and about the time the fire started I was engaged in getting information for two or three Members in the Library at the time, and I was at the west side of the Library in one of the alcoves getting the information, and afterwards I recrossed the Library to the east side to get a book for Mr. Nickle, and as I was crossing before a statue one of the messengers cried out that the reading-room was on fire—it was full of smoke. I told him to lock the door. There is an iron door leading from the Library to the reading-room, and he immediately locked that door. In the meantime, Mr. Nickle had gone out after he heard the cry, and he had to turn back again, but the door was then locked and kept locked—that is after Mr. Nickle returned.

Q. I suppose that was all you saw?—A. Yes, as far as the working of the fire goes.

Q. Of course you are familiar with the reading-room and the woodwork and the combustible character of the material in it?—A. Yes—I know it well—it was formerly the old Library.

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Q. I suppose it would burn pretty rapidly?—A. Well, of course I do not think the reading-room would burn as rapidly as people would imagine, because the galleries going around it were full of library books, 20,000 volumes.

Q. But taking into consideration that is dry pine there many years and covered with several coatings of varnish, what would you say as to that?—A. Oh, certainly, as far as that is concerned, but, Mr. White, the moment the gallery gave way—remember there are three or four tons of books coming down.

Q. Your mind and mine are running at different periods—I am speaking of the inception of the fire—of course, I easily understand when the fire was advanced enough the gallery would fall and the books help to keep the fire down, but I am speaking of the inception of the fire?—A. I have no opinion as to that, because I did not see it, but I know the position of the stands.

Q. The fire did not get into the library?—A. No. I wish to make a reference to a report of Chief Graham, and anything I am going to say I do not want it to be understood as detracting in the least from the good work of Chief Graham and his men, but about saving the Library, the Chief is reported to have said that the closing of the door had very little to do with the saving of the Library—in my mind, it cut away all draughts—the draught coming into the Library was the same as in the main corridors.

Q. There was always a draught more or less in the corridor and Library?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear any explosion?—A. No, sir; the only one was the falling of the glass roof overhead in the reading-room.

Q. And that sounded like an explosion?—A. Well, I would not like to say that because I knew what it was.

Q. It was the cause anyway?—A. Yes. There is another thing—that is a statement in regard to Colonel Street of the 77th and his men. Those men if so fond of pilfering could have taken thousands of dollars worth of valuables from the library. We have a collection of Canadian coins and medals and also the Jubilee coins, and they could have been taken without anybody seeing them for we were attending to the removal of the books at that time and there was not five cents' worth taken from the library, so I wanted to make that statement on behalf of the staff of the library because it had been reported that these men were stealing everything and had filled their pockets with coins.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You say that they had lots of opportunity but you think as far as the soldiers are concerned there was nothing wrong with them whatever?—A. Nothing at all.

Q. Of what regiments?—A. The 77th and the Engineers.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

MEDERIC MARTIN, M.P., sworn:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are representative of one of the divisions of Montreal in the House of Commons?—A. Yes.

Q. And also Mayor of Montreal?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were present that evening?—A. Yes.

Q. You were there when the fire originated?—A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you agree with the others that it was about nine o'clock?—A. It was 9.03 when the fire first started.

Q. And you were on your way, I understand, from the Chamber to your room?—A. No, my clothes.

Q. Was that after the alarm of fire had been given?—A. It was before.

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Q. What attracted your attention to the fire in the first place?—A. I left the House about 9.03 to get my coat——

Q. Where was your coat?—A. In the locker—so I got out of the House about nine o'clock and with my friend Mr. Thiberge, and I got out and was going with my hands in my pocket—that is I came out the door at the northeast corner of the House and proceeded to my wardrobe which would be on the north side just around the corner, and there was no fire there.

Q. Coming out of this northeast door, you would only be a short distance from the reading-room doors?—A. Yes.

Q. And your wardrobe is just around the corner?—A. Yes, about eight feet.

Q. And when you came out you saw no fire in the reading room?—A. Nothing at all, what I heard was a puff and I turned, and the fire was there. I ran to the back Speaker's door and shouted: "Fire in the House, get out."

Q. Then you turned around to look in the reading room?—A. Yes, I had my coat in my hand and dropped it, I thought it was an explosion in the reading room. I heard two puffs on the glass coming down, and I said: "My coat and my life," and I left it there and ran into the House of Commons and said: "Mr. Speaker, big fire in the House, get out."

Q. When you ran into the House of Commons were they then moving—I want to see if you gave the alarm before Mr. Glass—the Deputy Speaker says Mr. Glass gave it?—A. I do not know what they did before.

Q. You think you gave the first alarm?—A. Yes, I am sure of it.

Q. Did you go in the same door that you came out of?—A. Yes. The fire was coming so fast from that reading-room I threw my coat and ran and said: "Mr. Speaker, big fire in the reading-room."

Q. That fire must have been instantaneous?—A. Speaking for myself the fire was put but I cannot explain it.

Q. When you heard the puff did you see the policeman at work with the extinguisher?—A. No. They always have a policeman at that door and I did not see him then.

Q. In a report in the *Citizen* of February 4, you were reported as saying: "My first thought was the fire extinguisher which was near by, but the policemen were then endeavouring to press it into service and I went off and went into the Chamber." That is a report of an interview with you?—A. The newspaper man may have said that but I did not see anybody there.

Q. You did not say that to the papers?—A. No. It was so fast I cannot explain it. I had my coat and was going out of the door to go to my bed, for I am a working-man, and I had not left the door three seconds, and I heard pouff and I threw my coat and the fire was about three feet from the back at the door and I went and said: "Mr. Speaker, big fire in the House, get out," and I had no time to get my coat.

Q. You did not save your coat?—A. Nothing, I saved my life.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. If I remember rightly, Mr. Simpson of the Hansard, says it was 8.58 when the alarm was given in the Chamber?—A. Oh, no.

Q. Do you say it was three minutes after nine or three to nine?—A. I left the House to go to my bed because I am a working-man, and I looked at the clock and it was nine o'clock, and I had my friend, Mr. Thiberge there—every night he comes to my room—and it was nine o'clock.

Q. The fire was put off from nine to nine-five. They had no fire up to 9.03. I was going along and was thinking and there was no fire there at all, and just as I took my coat I heard pouff, and I dropped my coat and it was an explosion—the fire was at my back. I said I will give the alarm to the House of Commons, and I went in and shouted, "Get out."

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Q. You mean to say when you came out from that northeast corner of the House of Commons that there was no sign of fire?—A. No.

Q. No smoke?—A. No.

Q. Nothing at all?—A. No.

Q. And you simply opened the wardrobe and got your coat and heard the explosion and saw the fire almost at your back and you dropped your coat and turned to the Chamber and gave the alarm?—A. Yes, that is the truth.

Q. It is almost instantaneous?—A. Yes—all at once the fire was in my back and I ran into the House and said: "Mr. Speaker, fire in the House, get out." It was put and that is my opinion, and at 9.50 I phoned to Montreal and told Chief Tremblay to be ready to give help to Ottawa.

Q. You said you were thinking when going along the corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. I did not think the Mayor of Montreal had to do any thinking?—A. You just think that.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The door of the reading-room was swinging?—A. Yes—I do not know how it was opened but the flames were coming out.

Q. It is said by previous witnesses who were present and were trying to put out the fire, that the fire went very quickly after it got a start, and that they were inside working with the extinguisher trying to put it out—you might not have seen them owing to the door of the place being shut?—A. Well, they may be right.

Q. And further than that, I suppose when the air would get heated in the reading-room the fire would burst open the door with an explosion of air—that would be natural?—A. We are used to seeing a constable at that door.

Q. The constable says he was inside fighting the fire?—A. Well, he was not at the door when I came there.

Q. He may have been inside?—A. Perhaps.

Q. Did you happen to meet Madame Verville in the corridor?—A. No, I do not know how she came out.

Q. Being a working-man you keep early hours?—A. Yes. For me, Mr. President, the fire was put.

Q. That is your opinion—it is all a matter of opinion so far?—A. Well, because it was so quick and so fast.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

ERNEST A. LESUER, sworn:

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. I might ask you two or three questions—what is your occupation?—A. Chemical engineer.

Q. Of a good many years' experience?—A. Twenty-six.

Q. Have you seen any large fires?—A. Oh, yes.

Q. What experience have you had with regard to fires?—A. My particular experience has been with fires caused with spontaneous combustion in chemical work—in one case particularly I have in mind due to a man not being careful about the proper disposal of wastes, of dry waste containing oil, linseed oil. Might I say anything other than in reply to questions?

Q. Quite so?—A. There is a general impression that in explosions is what you might term a detonation or sharp noise, but to give you an idea, I had occasion last spring to destroy 300 pounds of gun cotton, but burning it—it was burned by 30 pounds at a time. These were taken out to a field and a fuse lighted and the man would run away, and the fuse would light the powder. These 30 pounds, if exploded by detonation, would have killed anybody within a radius of some feet, but listening closely

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at a distance of 50 yards it was necessary to listen keenly to hear it go off at all—it was instantaneous but only a loud puff. It was set off by fire instead of by detonation. This may be of importance in showing the different grades of explosions. I think you have had very full evidence about methods of fire from spontaneous combustion, but one thing I would like to say: you know, of course, that a highly combustible place like the reading-room when properly set fire to would burn like tinder, but it would be impossible for anybody to cause a sudden outburst of flame by merely starting a paper—it has to kindle first—in order to set fire to anything concrete, as distinguished from anything fluffy, as cotton-batting, you must apply fire to kindle it for a space of time. I would just mention one thing that will explain that: fires are known to start in the case of dust—the way a fire is sometimes started in a flour mill would be by letting a barrel drop from the top to the bottom and it bursts into flame if an accumulation of dust sufficient to charge the surrounding air with combustible matter enough to take up its oxygen and the presence of a gas jet or something to give ignition, that might spread a fire with great rapidity. If such a condition existed in the reading-room as an accumulation of dust, as in a heap sometimes found in poorly kept theatres or skating rinks, this might happen. Whether or not it was possible for anybody to have deposited quantities of dust in a corner out of sight, dust that would fly into the air.

Q. There might be dust on the baseboards?—A. This I have reference to would be an accumulation of dust which would be thrown in the air with a slight disturbance, and I assumed that reading-room was sufficiently carefully looked after, and while there was a great deal of wood and paper there would be no heaps of light combustible dust.

Q. The evidence in that regard was that it was dusted out every morning——

By Mr White, K.C.:

Q. Does not the detonation to which you referred depend to a large extent on whether the explosive is confined within a space—in the open it would explode with very little noise, but the same quantity confined in a hole or covered with a rock would produce a loud noise?—A. It depends. If the cotton I spoke of had been detonated with a cap, it would have made a louder noise—you would be nearly killed by it. The more freely it is exposed to the air the louder noise it makes. I had a large quantity of high explosives shot off under a rock, and the noise was not nearly as great as the same quantity the other way.

Q. That would be in a cayute?—A. Yes.

Q. That would be a different thing—I am not an expert but I have had a little experience, and it seems to me you could explode a dynamite cartridge in the open with a small noise and place the same cartridge in a hole in a rock and well tamped, and it would create very much more noise?—A. I am sorry to say you are absolutely wrong, totally, and I should like to show it, for it is a matter of experience. I saw two cartridges lying on top of a stump and a fire burned them up. My man was within eight feet of them and nothing hit him, but he was nearly killed.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You heard the description of Mayor Martin as to the instantaneous manner of this reading-room bursting into flames? As an expert, would you state if that would be caused in the ordinary way?—A. No, Mr. Commissioner.

Q. Then what would cause a condition such as described by Mayor Martin?—A. I cannot say all the things that would cause it, but one thing would be the blowing out of some slight explosion of some inflammable material in what has been called incendiary bombs—I hesitate to say that that is the only way.

Q. The placing of chemicals on paper, which after it lies for a short time sets the paper on fire—would that cause it?—A. Absolutely. I would undertake to cause such a condition with that sort of thing.

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Q. I am informed that not only do they use this solution which causes the fire, but that a chemical could be scattered in a dry form in that reading-room and once the water is thrown on it, it would cause flame—what the chemical is I do not know, nor is it necessary perhaps to know what it is?—A. There are such chemicals, but as far as I know they all denote their presence by smell.

Q. They would be detected by their odor?—A. I think so, as far as I know.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Perhaps it would be well for you to consider before tying yourself to an absolute opinion, the facts we have in evidence—the evidence of Mr. Glass is that he was reading at one of the desks and had been there ten minutes when his attention was attracted to heat alongside and looking down he saw smoke or the presence of fire in the lower shelf of one of the desks quite close to him, where there was only a space of six inches between that and the upper shelf where the papers were on fire—he immediately gave the alarm and the constable responded with the fire extinguisher. The constable's statement and also that of Mr. Glass is that in using the extinguisher, when trying to get under the shelf it blew out the paper there against the papers hung loosely on the partition—a partition covered with many coats of varnish, and of dry pine, and the fire went up like a flash, and finally the heat was such in a few minutes that they had to abandon the extinguisher and get out of the room; that is corroborated by Madame Verville who saw the fire and passed the desk where the fire was located without any trouble or without experiencing any inconvenience, and is also corroborated by one of the pages and the door-keeper of the House of Commons—they say the fire until driven out by the flame and smoke was all confined to the one spot and nobody heard an explosion—now what would you say in regard to a fire of that kind?—A. As regards the origin of the fire, I suppose you do not wish to hear expressions of views as to that, but the rest of it sounds like an ordinary fire.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. Mr. White has fairly stated what the evidence was except that it impressed me this way: when Mr. Glass first saw the fire he was standing at the second desk—he saw no smoke or evidence of fire, and turned around and sees this paper bursting into flame very rapidly—that is, as I understand it, Mr. Glass' evidence. What struck me was this: in some little experiments we had here the other day we started a fire with a match or a cigar or cigarette, and it burned very slowly for a time before bursting into flame; we started a fire with a chemical and the flame instantaneous, and as I take Mr. Glass' evidence this flame was instantaneous—he saw no smoke or smelt none. He was attracted first by the heat and turned and saw this fire in a flame. Mrs. Verville says she first saw the papers on the partition on fire—she did not see the start of the fire?

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. On page 14 of Mr. Glass' evidence, he says:—

“I had been only reading a short part of this paragraph when I felt a wave of heat passing up alongside me as if from a hot-air register, and I turned around and almost immediately with my turning I smelt the burning of paper and I stooped down and saw the smoke coming out, and my recollection is that this burning was on the second horizontal part of the desk, of the one behind me—it was well in on the pile of papers.”

He does not say that he saw the flames coming out. That is the statement of the first man who saw the fire?—A. I would like to add a word about the possibility of causing fire from inflammable materials. There are pyrophorics which are dry powders and as a rule have no smell, and which catch fire on exposure to the air, but as far as I know these things start instantaneously on exposure to the air.

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Q. Do you know of any chemical which could be treated by a person desiring to set that building on fire and that could be placed on the top of papers and with which it was possible to time the period at which it would take fire?—A. Not exactly.

Q. Could they come within half an hour?—A. Well, it would give the party time to get away—as a rule it would be much quicker.

Q. I am speaking of phosphorus?—A. The trouble about that is that it would diminish itself—a certain amount would diminish itself necessarily.

Q. Do you know of any chemical like that that would not be detected by its odor?—A. No, that could not. Of course there are various ways—a man on the trail of something has his senses alert, and I do not suppose anybody was suspecting this.

Q. No more than an ordinary smoke in a room?—A. Exactly.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. Mr. Glass, on page 136, says this:—

“Q. You have seen these fires here, did the one started with a match burn faster than the fire started with a chemical preparation?—A. I do not think it did, until the papers were disturbed.

“Q. Did it burn in a manner similar, as far as you can tell, to the fire started by the chemical?—A. More so than the other one.

“Q. More so than the fire started by the match?—A. Yes.

“Q. Can you see any difference in the appearance of these two fires, the one started with the chemical and the other started with a match, in the appearance of the flame?—A. Yes, seeing them there the appearance of this one is more like it to me. I mean the one started with the chemical than the one started with a match.”

Would there be a difference in the appearance of the flame?—A. Yes, always some and possibly a great difference.

Q. Would there be such a difference that a man could detect the difference between a fire started with this chemical and one started with a match?—A. I would say absolutely yes if he saw it at the start where the chemical was placed.

Q. Then I should say from that answer it would be reasonable that Mr. Glass, having seen the inception of this fire, and having seen here an experiment where a fire was started with chemicals, and another with a match, it would be competent for him to say which fire he saw?—A. I should not go as far as that. I mean I should hardly say that he would be the final arbitrator, and could say definitely that it was absolutely so, but he could give a very strong opinion.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Of course there is considerable difference between a scientist in a laboratory taking and making an experiment and seeing and using these things, and a man who sees them unexpectedly and tries to describe them afterwards?—A. Nothing could be more true. In a case like this particularly.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Now Mr. Glass appears to have been there for some ten minutes before he noticed the fire—he was not smoking, nor was anybody else there smoking, the only other person there being Mr. Northrup, and he swears he was not smoking—if that fire had started prior to Mr. Glass entering there and had been smoldering away for ten minutes, would it not be reasonable that it would have been detected by smoke or smell?—A. Yes, certainly reasonable.

Q. He is asked by Mr. White: “Did you notice any odour in the reading-room while reading,” and he answered, not the slightest, saying: “I did not detect the fire by the smell of smoke—it was the heat first.”

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“ Q. But you did not detect it by smoke?—A. I saw the smoke before smelling it.

“ Q. But you did not smell any other odour in the air?—A. None whatever.”

A. That by itself looks like spontaneous combustion.

Q. Or chemicals?—A. Well yes, from chemical causes. For instance, we sometimes catch these fires before they start, because we find something getting very hot.

Q. Which is the easiest fire to control—supposing papers started in an ordinary way with a match, or cigar, would it be easier to control than a fire started with a chemical?—A. In general, yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Would you say so if it had spread from the place where the chemicals were—would it make any difference then?—A. Oh, no. Not as far as the outlying part is concerned. I might point out that nothing ever burns outside of thermal except gas. If paper catches it is the gas that is produced by the burning that causes the smoke, and you can see sometimes smoke change to flame, and the reason is that smoke is a combustible gas.

Q. Would the fact that the ventilating fan was working to full capacity and drawing the air from that room through the registers in the floor, would that have the effect supposing there were slow combustion, of drawing that smoke down and prevent anybody standing there from smelling it?—A. It certainly might.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. If there is any further information you can give us we will be glad to have it?—A. There is nothing more I can think of now.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

HARRY W. ANDERSON, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a reporter on the *Globe*?—A. Yes.

Q. How long have you been engaged in that work?—A. Fifteen or sixteen years.

Q. You have in the course of that time been at a good many fires and attended fire investigations?—A. A fair number.

Q. You are pretty intimately associated with Inspector Rogers in connection with the fire in the Parliament Buildings in Toronto?—A. I was in the buildings at the time of the fire and turned in the alarm.

Q. Do you know anything as to explosions?—A. I am not an expert as to that, but the outbreak of that fire—the first realization we had of it was the result of a short series of three or four sharp explosions.

Q. That is in the buildings at Toronto?—A. Yes, the legislative buildings.

Q. It was a fire of considerable magnitude?—A. Yes, it destroyed the whole wing of the building.

Q. Was the cause of that fire discovered afterwards?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were quite satisfied with it?—A. Yes.

Q. What was the cause of it?—A. The workmen had been doing some soldering and left their burning can with the melted solder and it had overturned during their dinner hour while it was not guarded there, and that was established at the inquest.

Q. The fire was purely an accident?—A. Yes.

Q. And although it was that, you all heard two or three sharp explosions?—A. Oh yes.

Q. Have you any other experience in regard to similar fires?—A. No, I think not.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You say the fire was caused by the upsetting of this melted solder?—A. Yes, that was established at the inquiry.

Q. It was not a chemical that upset?—A. No, I understood it was this molten lead, or whatever they used for soldering.

Q. Was the heat under the lead when it upset?—A. I could not say.

Q. It must have been, I should think?—A. Was it what, do you say?

Q. Was it heated—was the heat under it?—A. Oh, yes, surely.

Q. You were not at the building here, the night of the fire?—A. I was not in there just at the moment.

Q. You heard, however, it spread with great rapidity?—A. Yes, I heard the distinct explosions between the room of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and that of Honourable Mr. Rogers, Minister of Public Works, that night.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Where are they located, with reference to the reading room?—A. About 100 yards away.

Q. And was that after the fire had got hold of the building?—A. Well, there was a good deal of smoke in the corridors.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

JAS. HUNTER, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You are the Deputy Minister of Public Works?—A. Yes.

Q. And as Deputy Minister of Public Works you are charged to some extent at least with the responsibility of seeing that the Parliament buildings are properly provided with fire appliances?—A. Yes.

Q. You have ascertained the number of fire extinguishers placed in the Parliament buildings within the last four or five years?—A. Yes.

Q. I see in your list 12 Underwriters, 33 Fairbanks, 10 May-Oatway, 7 guards, 12 fire reels, 3,150 feet 2½-inch hose, and 33 hydrants?—A. Yes.

Q. You refer in this document to the general contract with the Ontario May-Oatway fire alarm system—when was that put in?—A. In 1912—that is an automatic fire detector.

Q. And it seems to have worked perfectly on the night of the fire?—A. Yes, apparently it did.

Q. The cost you say of the Central Block, was estimated at \$10,350, which was for 280 detectors, 11 switches and 9 gongs?—A. Yes.

Q. Now, the attic of the House of Commons and the Senate, were they supposed to be fireproof?—A. Those have been always particularly dangerous fire-traps—they were open, and that is where the light was from—so we fireproofed all the beams over the Commons Chamber and the Senate, and while that would not stop a fire from beneath, our idea was to prevent a fire originating there from spreading.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. How did you fireproof it?—A. By metal lathing around these wooden beams, and then concrete and plaster.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. That is both in the attic of the House of Commons and Senate?—A. Yes, and the result of that was to delay the progress of the fire to such an extent that the firemen were able to get control of the rear part and save the Library. I think the work we did last summer saved the Library.

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Q. There were some items in the newspapers in regard to certain statements? —A. Oh, yes—in the Ottawa papers there have been some comments about the department having turned down Chief Graham's offer about putting patrols around the building, and saying that we regarded it as absolute nonsense. I have a letter I wrote in April, 1915—this suggestion of the chief's had been made from time to time, to put a division of his brigade in the buildings—there was no objection to that, only he wanted the Government to pay for it, that is to have a larger brigade at the Government's expense. It was to that the objection was made—there never was any objection to his men to go through the buildings, and familiarize themselves with them, but we objected to him unloading a large fire brigade of his own on the Government. That was his idea. This was the letter I wrote, and which was misconstrued. It is to the Secretary of the Board of Control, dated the 14th of April, 1915, and is as follows:—

April 14, 1915.

DEAR SIR,—Your favour of the 6th instant, with enclosures addressed to the Honourable the Minister of Public Works, *re* fire protection for Government buildings, has been handed to me, and in reply I beg to say that the recommendation of Chief Graham of the Fire Department of the city of Ottawa, that a staff of the corporation firemen patrol the interior of the Government buildings, has been carefully considered by the Commissioner of Dominion Police, and it is pointed out that this duty, as the fire chief is aware, is performed by the Dominion police, who have a perfect knowledge of every hole and corner of these buildings, and who are always ready and on hand to show the corporation firemen the location of the fire; and, as a matter of fact, the Dominion police generally have the fire under control, as in the case of the Langevin block, with the hose playing upon it, when the city firemen arrive.

The Commissioner of Dominion Police is of opinion that it is absolute nonsense to assert that fires would be discovered earlier if firemen from the City Fire Department patrolled the buildings instead of the police. It is noted that every time a fire occurs in any of the Government buildings, the chief seizes the opportunity to renew his suggestion.

A great many improvements have been made of recent years in the fire-fighting and fire-protection appliances in the Dominion buildings at Ottawa, and I have always found the Commissioner of Dominion Police ready and willing to consider any suggestions in the way of equipment which the Chief of the Ottawa Fire Department cared to offer at any time, but it does not necessarily follow that all suggestions must be adopted.

The inauguration of a system whereby the Ottawa Fire Department would have jurisdiction over the Government buildings, and have a staff of its own—paid by the Government—patrol same, would, however, appear to be entirely unnecessary, in view of the existing satisfactory arrangement.

Yours truly,

J. B. HUNTER,

Deputy Minister.

NORMAN H. LETT, Esq.,

Secretary, Board of Control,
Ottawa.

WITNESS: As you will, his suggestion was to put those firemen around the Government buildings. To say that they would discover a fire sooner than the 75 Government policemen, is what we characterize as absolute nonsense, and it is not that there was any objection to the men familiarizing themselves with the building.

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Nobody ever made any objection to that, and I hope I have made it clear as to what has been characterized as absolute nonsense.

(Letter produced as Exhibit 12.)

Q. Is there anything further?—A. I would like to add that in connection with the public buildings to-day, an improved fire appliance throughout the buildings, that steps were taken to train the messengers in every department on how to use the apparatus, and at night to have the watchmen act as firemen. On the 30th April, I wrote the Deputy Ministers of each department, as follows:—

OTTAWA, April 30, 1915.

DEAR SIR,—As you are aware, the fire protection service in the Dominion Government buildings at Ottawa is under the control of a special staff of Dominion Policemen, under the direction of the Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police, and it has been suggested that, if the messengers of the different departments knew how to operate the fire extinguishers, and other fire fighting appliances provided in the buildings, they would be in a position to render valuable assistance and stop a fire in its incipient stages.

I would like to invite your co-operation in this proposal, so far as the messengers of your staff are concerned

If you would kindly give the necessary instructions to your head messenger, and let me know, the Chief Commissioner of Dominion Police will have Inspector Giroux see your head messenger and arrange details.

Yours truly,

J. B. HUNTER,

Deputy Minister.

The Deputy Minister,
Archives Department,
Ottawa, Ont.

(Letter filed as Exhibit 13.)

WITNESS: I may say that each Deputy Minister responded heartily, and had the instructions given and the messengers were drilled in the use of the appliances, by Inspector Giroux.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. We have had a statement from a witness that a hose would be quite sufficient to cover every part of the main building?—A. It is arranged in that way.

Q. And always understood to be quite satisfactory?—A. Yes.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You had nothing to do with the patrolling?—A. No, that is done with the Dominion Police. In other words, they direct the fire appliances, or operate the fire appliances that we put in, and as an additional help, we organize this drill of the messengers and others.

Q. Was the question of a sprinkling system ever considered?—A. Yes, and it is a very good system, but what threw the balance in favour of the fire detector when these automatic appliances were under consideration, was the fact that if we put in a sprinkler system, such as some advised, it might be that the members of the House, while some member would be in the middle of a speech, would apt to get a shower bath and then the whole system would go out of the place faster than it came in. The Department was therefore, loathe to put it in, in the event of that transpiring. However, we are taking that up again in the Departmental buildings—I do not see why it should not go in the office, but in the Chamber, I think we had better leave it out.

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By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Would it come out that in an antiquated building, it would be difficult to put in such a system?—A. I am not familiar with it, but I have no doubt it would be very difficult.

Mr. PRINGLE TO CHIEF GRAHAM: Chief, you have heard Mr. Hunter's remarks?—A. Yes, Mr. Hunter wants to show that there is hearty co-operation between the Fire Chief and the Dominion Police—they say they carried out a good many suggestions of mine, but you can read Mr. Hunter's report in a different way. I did not suggest that those firemen should do the work of 75 policemen, but what I did suggest was that if some firemen were there, and changing about every few weeks, it would not take long to acquaint 100 firemen with the buildings. We do much better work in the buildings that we are familiar with.

Q. I have not seen anything yet to show that you have been prevented from familiarizing yourself with these buildings?—A. It is hardly likely that the Department of Ottawa would add 6 or 8 men to a brigade for that purpose.

Mr. WHITE: Does not this come within the realm of something we have nothing to do with—the condition at the time and the origin of the fire is what concerns us, and we are going far afield if “skinning skunks” that we don't have to.

Mr. PRINGLE: The only reason would be to show negligence on the part of anybody, but I understand that while the Government was not pleased to adopt your suggestions, to put firemen under pay, that they gave you every opportunity to familiarize yourselves with the building.

Mr. HUNTER: That has been confirmed with the chief's report—he has been through all the buildings. The only thing is it was misread, and I wanted it read in the spirit in which it was written. There was every desire to have co-operation with the city, for it would be foolish and unfortunate to have any thing else, and it would be very unfortunate if such a thing arose to prevent such co-operation, and that is why I wrote, in order to give that idea, and that that would be a end of the matter in the newspapers.

CHIEF GRAHAM: My experience in the Langevin block fire, is different to what is in the report there.

Mr. PRINGLE: What we are most interested in is the origin of the fire, that is my friend Judge MacTavish and myself, yet at the same time, I am ready to spend time to see matters adjusted between the Government and the City Fire Brigade, because it is of the greatest possible importance that they should work in harmony. It is true that you have made valuable suggestions to the Government that have been carried out, to a large extent, and I would be sorry if this investigation would cause any friction in any way between the Government staff and the city fire brigade.

Mr. HUNTER: The friction already exists, and if you can remove it you would be doing well—it should be removed, and what we desire is co-operation, and we want to give the Chief credit for every suggestion he makes, but the idea is that the Government can manage its own fire protection and not turn it over to the city fire brigade. As to the Improvement Commission grant a part of that is to cover the co-operation of the city brigade in looking after the Government buildings—that is one of the conditions of the grant.

Mr. WHITE: Surely, with the statement made by Mr. Hunter here, the Chief ought to be satisfied, that is as far as the authorities are concerned. There may be friction lower down, but surely there is every desire to meet the Chief half way, and I think he ought to be satisfied with that.

Mr. PRINGLE: There is no question but that the brigade acted with great promptness the night of the fire.

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Mr. HUNTER: Yes, the detector worked, and they responded very promptly.

His Honour JUDGE MACTAVISH: The second alarm was sent in by the chief within 7 or 8 minutes?—A. Yes.

Mr. PRINGLE: I quite agree with you, Mr. White, that I do not know whether it is absolutely pertinent to the investigation,—I find our duty is to conduct an inquiry into the origin of the fire, but it does strike me that we should get away from any friction, if there is any. Now, I think with the explanations Mr. Hunter has made, probably the Chief ought to be satisfied—I do not know whether or not you are Chief, but if you are, now is the time to say so, because there is no doubt, there is a feeling of friction existing between the Government and the brigade of the City of Ottawa, and it is not in the public's interests. You have made these suggestions to the Government that have been mentioned, and they have been carried out almost entirely—where have you any ground of complaint now with regard to the Government?

CHIEF GRAHAM: I am not complaining in any way any more than I am sure that if the members of the City Fire Department knew those buildings well, they would do better work in the event of fire.

Q. The men have found those buildings always open to them, as members of the city fire brigade?—A. In one way, the same as any other person, but I will give you an instance that will show you that they are not in another way: Two weeks before that we had a false-alarm at 3 o'clock in the morning, and when I arrived there, I found twenty firemen standing outside and I asked them where the fire was, and they said they did not know, they could not get in. I said that was contrary to my orders—my orders are that they have to go in and find the cause of the alarm. I said to the man there, not to keep the firemen out, and then the sergeant came and said, "I will let you in, but I will not let your men be running over this building."

Q. There was not a fire?—A. No, but there was an alarm, and those policemen had not an opportunity to ascertain whether there was a fire or not. The announcer showed that there was a fire in the south basement.

Q. Coming down to February 3, the alarm worked perfectly?—A. Yes.

Q. And you responded promptly?—A. Yes.

Q. And you as Chief, and your men, did all you could in your fire?—A. Yes.

Mr. HUNTER: This indicator is a board and it would not take a man two minutes to go to the point indicated and see if there was a fire there—there is no necessity for the firemen to go in there; let that responsibility rest on the police. That is, where the policeman can say, "I am sorry, you are up on a false alarm."

Chief GRAHAM: Any man that would act like that under me, I would suspend him.

Mr. HUNTER: Then you had better change your instructions to meet the situation—you forget there is a fire organization in the building.

CHIEF GRAHAM: We do not recognize it.

Mr. HUNTER: You must recognize it, and that is the point.

Mr. PRINGLE: You seem to be adding fuel instead of smoothing it over.

Mr. WHITE (to Chief Graham): Do you think, if you came to my house on an alarm of fire, and I met you at the door, and said: "Chief, I am sorry, but it is a false alarm," do you think your men should force their way into my house in the middle of the night?

CHIEF GRAHAM: Yes, I would not like to take your word for it.

Mr. WHITE: Then you would have a nice time getting into my house, except over my body.

SESSIONAL PAPER No. 72a

By Mr. PRINGLE: Do you think a divided responsibility is desirable—here are the buildings administered by the Dominion Government, and they devise a system which they think good, and they co-operate with you and the fire brigade—they have a system, and their staff, and when you go there, and the staff informs you that there is no fire, what further responsibility have you got, if they are the officials in charge?

Chief GRAHAM: At the time of the Langevin Block, when the late Chief Young went up there, he was not allowed in.

Mr. HUNTER: That is long ago.

Chief GRAHAM: Yes, and the same thing in the post office, and that is the reason I made those recommendations to Sir Wilfrid Laurier—I was not going to be caught in the same box as Chief Young and Chief Prevost. I do not like to go up there at 3 o'clock in the morning, when 10 below zero, and have to take the word of a policeman. The duty of the firemen is to hunt for fires.

Mr. HUNTER: The policeman is the Government fireman.

Chief GRAHAM: What experience have they in fighting fires?

Mr. HUNTER: They have had considerable experience—they put out a lot of fires—you go to fight the fire, but the policeman is there to hunt up the fire and give you the information.

Chief GRAHAM: But I am responsible for any fire in the city.

Mr. WHITE, K.C.: If no fire, then, why do you want to fight the policeman?

Mr. HUNTER: Exactly.

Chief GRAHAM: I don't like to be told I am talking absolute nonsense.

Mr. HUNTER: You were not told that.

Mr. PRINGLE: You made certain recommendations, and if nonsense they would not have been followed. You say they have been followed almost entirely. I do not think anybody has made assertion as to them being absolute nonsense. There seems a little division of opinion in regard to authority, the Dominion Government authorities thinking they should have control over these buildings, and you thinking you should have control.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Mr. ALF. BRADBURY, duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What is it you have to say?—A. I do not know—I want to know what you want.

Q. I do not know that I want anything.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I notice some interviews with you, and I notice that you gave evidence at the coroner's inquest about being present at the night of the fire, and you might just tell us about it.—A. Yes, I went up to the Buildings at 8 o'clock—I was waiting for some party, and was in Room 16, and about four or five minutes to nine I walked out of 16 down the corridor to the post office, and as I reached there, a messenger rushed out of the east corridor, and said: "There is a fire in the library,"—I understood him to say the word library, and to get the hose. He turned back, and I ran up the western corridor, and turned towards the reading room, and got within ten feet of it, and it was then a seething mass of flames inside. There was a Dominion Policeman standing nearby doing something—I do not know what it was he was doing—I just looked at the place for a moment, and I thought I could close those swinging doors. They were

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open, that is the west door of the reading room—I saw the policeman trying to close the door, and I ran back about twenty feet, and there was a dull thud—the wardrobe doors rattled, and I was thrown off my feet and my hat went off ahead of me.

Q. What do you think made you go off your feet?—A. I cannot say—I heard a rumbling sound, as if blasting in a drain, but a distant one. When the doors rattled, I went off my feet; I grabbed my hat, and got up, and while I got up, ahead of me about thirty feet to the left, there was a flame, and to the right there were two flames up in the corridor. The flame was a little this side of the entrance to the Speaker's Private quarters.

Q. That would be the corridor immediately north of the House of Commons Chamber, and the west of that corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. All those flames, when you first looked into the room it was a seething mass of flames, and you proceeded westwards along the corridor, and you heard this rumbling noise and that threw you?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you fall?—A. I went down on my knees, and my hat fell off.

Q. Then you saw flames in a couple of places?—A. Yes.

Q. Was that caused from the burning of the wardrobe?—A. No, because the wardrobes were not on fire—the mass of fire was 25 feet behind them.

Q. That flame so to speak was in the air?—A. Yes, right in the cornice, and there was no smoke until after this noise.

Q. I do not understand about those flames—there didn't seem to be anything on fire?—A. The flame was as large as my hat in three distinct spots. I ran down and notified the messenger on the House of Commons door, and he gave the alarm in one door, and I spoke in the other, and I went to Room 16, giving the alarm there, and then got out and stayed out.

Q. Did you notice Mayor Martin of Montreal there?—A. I did see him, but I cannot recall seeing him just then. There was a policeman and a civilian between me and the blaze in the room, but I did not recognize who it was.

Q. Where were you when your attention was first called to the fire?—A. In front of the post office.

Q. What called your attention to it?—A. A messenger ran down the east corridor, and said there was a fire in the library.

Q. And then you went to see?—A. Yes, I immediately ran.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Did you see a lady there?—A. No. I saw two people at that time, and then I saw a third.

Q. Were these people thrown down too?—A. I could not say, and I did not wait to ask.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Did you hear any more than the one explosion?—A. Not, while in the building.

Q. Did you hear any afterwards when out of the building?—A. Yes, but I would not say they were explosions, they sounded like something falling in.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

(The Investigation was then adjourned until 2.30 p.m.)

Pursuant to adjournment the Commission resumed at 2.30 p.m.

R. L. HAYCOCK, duly sworn, deposed:—

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You were engineer in charge of the Ottawa Waterworks system?—A. Acting waterworks engineer of the city.

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Q. You were not on duty that night?—A. Not until notified that there was a fire?

Q. You got notification at your own house?—A. Yes.

Q. At what time?—A. I got first notice at 10 after 9, I have a gauge in the house, and I noticed the pressure was high, I tried to call the pump house to see what the trouble was, and could not raise central, and then the pump house called me and said there was a fire uptown, and when I found it out, I gave them instructions not to overtax the plant, and also to operate the booster plant carefully and give all they could.

Q. That was to increase the pressure there?—A. Yes.

Q. What would the pressure be at the Parliament buildings?—A. Without hose drawing, the two booster pumps would give 90 pounds on the Hill.

Q. And with the hose drawing?—A. The best I saw that night was 40 pounds with all the hose drawing.

Q. How many lines were on?—A. I understand about 18.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I think 21, to be exact—A. Is that it?

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You remained in the vicinity of the fire until what time?—A. From 10.30 to 3.30.

Q. During that time did you hear some explosions?—A. I heard about five explosions near the main entrance, between the Senate and the House of Commons, I was on the steps there, and it was especially between 12.30 and the time the tower fell at 1.30, and it was within that time that I heard five explosions at least, they are hard to describe, they were not heavy, but a dull sound, and immediately followed by a metallic hissing, which extended over two or three seconds, and each one was practically the same, with practically no difference between them.

Q. You have no opinion to express as to what caused them?—A. No, only that it was an explosion the like of which I have never heard.

Q. Have you heard explosions at fires before?—A. Yes, principally gas explosions.

Q. Could these have been explosions of a gas tank?—A. They might be, but they were so similar, it would be hard to have the tanks in the same condition.

Q. However, that would be two or three hours after the fire started, and could not possibly have anything to do with the origin of the fire?—A. No, I might say, that when I first went up on the Hill, the fire was well west to the main entrance, and it was when that fire was creeping from the House of Commons to the Senate side, that these explosions were noticed.

Q. The fire was pretty well under control on the Senate side?—A. Yes, so far as the outside was concerned—where they could get at it.

Q. Your pressure is all right at the pump house?—A. Yes, very good. I could put in two charts showing the pressure.

(Charts produced as Exhibit 14.)

Q. That shows the pressure at the main pump house?—A. The pressure went up at 9, and kept up, and a little after 11 it reached 110 pounds, and remained at that until morning, and then I told the pump house to ease the pumps, as the fire was under control. I have another exhibit here, which I will mark as Exhibit 15, which shows the pressure at the booster plant, that shows at 9 o'clock the pressure went up to 100 pounds, and they put in a second pump, and it went to 105, and was maintained at that until about 6 o'clock in the morning. Those charts are copies from the reporting charts in both plants.

Q. You have furnished a statement which may be important—this is your statement?—A. Yes.

Q. Then you might produce it as Exhibit 16.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

EXHIBIT No. 16.

MEMO.—PARLIAMENT BUILDING FIRE.

R. L. HAYCOCK:

At 9 p.m., Thursday, 3rd February, I noticed water pressure was high on gauge at my house at the east end of Besserer street.

Tried to call Main Pumping Station by phone at about 9.10 p.m. to inquire where fire was. Could not raise Central. At about 9.20 p.m. Main Pumping Station called me to say there was a fire at north end of Elgin street, and that the operators could see reflection on Main Tower of Parliament Buildings.

I immediately went up to see where fire was and to keep in touch with the pumping stations and Chief Graham with regard to water pressures and supply.

When I saw where fire was, the extent of it, I went to the Main Pumping Station to instruct operators to give all pressure possible, and to carefully watch the operation of the pumps, but not to overtax the plant.

Instructed, over the phone, the operators of the Booster Plant to watch carefully the operation of the pumps.

Back to the fire at about 10.30 p.m., and kept in touch with Fire Chief.

Between 12.30 and 1.30 a.m. Friday, I was at the head of the steps leading to the Main Entrance. During this time I distinctly heard about five explosions which seemed to be in the Main Entrance between Commons and Senate Chambers. These explosions were not heavy or sharp, but rather a dull sound, and were immediately followed by what might be described as a metallic hissing for a period of about two or three seconds. Each explosion was exactly the same.

I was not close to the fire before 10.30 p.m., as I was at the Main Pumping Station part of this time. After 10.30 and until 3.30 a.m., I was close to the fire all the time with the exception of twice going to phone to the pumping plants.

At 9 a.m., Friday, went to Main Pumping Station and told operators to ease off the pumps. Then to Booster Plant and told operators to keep two pumps working, (fire condition), until return blow from fire alarm. This return was sounded at 8 p.m. Friday.

The tracings of pressure charts for the Main Pump Station (Exhibit No. 14), and for the Booster Plant (Exhibit No. 15), shown as follows:—

Main Pumping Station—Just before 9 a.m., Thursday, pressure went from domestic of about 85 pounds to 100 pounds. At 11.10 p.m. pressure reached 110 pounds, and remained at this pressure till 6.30 a.m., Friday. Owing to the heavy city draught beginning at this time, the pressure gradually fell off to about 103 pounds at 9 a.m. As the fire was well under control at this time, I instructed the operators to ease off and operate as for domestic pumping (about 85 to 90 pounds).

Booster Plant—This plant takes care of the area covered by the Parliament Buildings. About 9 p.m., Thursday, the pressure went to about 105 pounds, then at 9.10 p.m. to about 125 pounds, which pressure was maintained until about 6 a.m., Friday. As the suction pressure was then dropped slightly at this time, the booster pressure reached about 115 pounds, at which pressure the pumps operated until the return fire alarm at about 8 p.m., Friday.

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Under normal conditions for domestic purposes, the main pumping station pumps about 19,000,000 gallons per day, but during the fire we pumped at the following rates:—

Date.	Time.	Rates per day in gallons.
February 3,	9 p.m. to 12 midnight.. . . .	23,898,720
February 4,	12 midnight to 3 a.m...	24,486,560
	3 a.m. to 6 a.m...	24,346,880
	6 a.m. to 9 a.m...	26,866,880
	9 a.m. to 12 noon.. . . .	25,904,650
	12 noon to 3 p.m...	24,767,360
	3 p.m. to 6 p.m...	23,658,720
	6 p.m. to 8 p.m...	21,366,240

GUSTAVE ARTHUR TASCHIEREAU, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have some statements to make, Colonel. I have no memorandum as to them——

Mr. PRINGLE: I understand Colonel TaschierEAU, in company with Mr. Hilliard of the War Purchasing Committee, had one of the military ambulances in front of the Commons' entrances, and heard certain explosions?

WITNESS: Yes, about 11 o'clock, and at that time the fire was sweeping from the House of Commons towards the main door.

Q. Probably the same time as Mr. Haycock heard them?

A. Yes, according to the description he gives.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Mr. Haycock says it was between 11 and 12 o'clock?—A. Yes, about 11. I left the rear part of the building when the fire was pretty low, and practically no fire at the front, and I went to Mr. Hilliard, who had the military ambulance, and we distinctively heard five explosions, and at the time I discussed with Mr. Hilliard about the explosions, and one of the staff said it was one of the radiators, but to me it seemed the same as a shot of a shell from the firing point, a dull sound followed by a metallic sound.

Q. That is perhaps what Mr. Haycock means by a metallic hissing?—A. It is hard to describe it—anybody who has heard the shell shots would know. It would be like the scraping of wire roughly over a piece of metal.

Q. And you heard four or five different explosions?—A. Yes.

Q. And they had that metallic hissing?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you ever have any experience with actual shell firing?—A. Except at Petawawa—I heard thousands of them there.

Q. Was this similar to that?—A. Very much similar.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You would be at the firing point?—A. Yes, and the shell would be flying away with its screeching sound.

Q. That screeching sound would be heard at Petawawa before the shell exploded at the point?—A. Yes.

Q. So in that case the screeching would come first and the sound afterwards?—A. Yes—what I meant by explosion first, was the detonation from the gun.

Q. And not the explosion of the shell?—A. No.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Well, I do not understand these explosions, but at that hour, you say the House of Commons was getting from the House of Commons side to the Senate side?—A. Yes, towards the tower.

Q. If any shell, would they not have exploded long prior to that?—A. There was not very much fire then.

Q. What would cause the explosions—time fuses or heat?—A. I could not say.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Does heat cause an ordinary shell to explode?—A. It would if enough heat to ignite the detonator or the fuse.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I do not suppose you know much about chemistry?—A. Very little, except the experience I had in college.

Q. Is there anything else then?—A. Only one thing, reading the paper about the rapidity with which the fire spread in the reading room, it came to my mind what I read sometime ago about a potassium sodium which would catch fire when in contact with water, liberating the hydrogen and causing a very rapid fire.

Q. In what form would that be?—A. Like a tinfoil—a metal.

Q. And that coming in contact with water would create fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Would the hydrogen be liberated before the fire took place?—A. Yes, because it would be so rapid it would liberate the hydrogen.

Q. But the odour of hydrogen is very perceptible.—A. I could not say as to that. And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Sergeant-Major GORDON C. MORTIMER, of the 77th Battalion, duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You first heard of the fire of the night of February 3 when?—A. Between 9.15 and 9.35.

Q. And you went there immediately?—A. Yes.

Q. And reached there when?—A. About 9.20.

Q. And there were some of your men there at the time?—A. They had just come there.

Q. And you instructed them to render every assistance?—A. Yes.

Q. When you got there, in what condition was the fire as to advancement?—A. It had pretty fair headway at the back of the building.

Q. That is, you mean at the rear of the Commons Chamber towards the Library?—A. Yes.

Q. And towards the Speaker's part?—A. I am not acquainted with the building.

Q. Do you know where the ladies were taken out?—A. Yes, I was there.

Q. Was it burning fiercely in that direction?—A. No, sir, not then.

Q. You know where the Commons Chamber was?—A. Yes.

Q. And was it burning in the rear of that pretty fiercely?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you hear any explosions at the time?—A. No, sir, I never heard any explosions, I heard two or three reports—the first I heard was about that quarter there.

Q. And did you investigate that after?—A. Yes, I went to look there immediately—we had men working there, and it was part of the wall that fell inwards there.

Q. And did it sound like an explosion?—A. Like a rumbling noise, sir.

Q. That would be about what time—how long after you got there?—A. A good while—it must have been between 10 and 11 or after 11.

Q. Prior to that you heard no noise?—A. Nothing.

Q. Did you enter the building that evening?—A. Very often, taking out property.

Q. That would be on the Senate side?—A. On both sides.

Q. Did your men?—A. Yes, helping in every way.

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Q. Did you, at any time order your men out of the building?—A. Yes, immediately I heard that report, and saw it was the wall that had fallen down,—it was in case of further walls falling down that I did so.

Q. While ordering your soldiers out, did you hear anything else?—A. Yes, the sound of falling glass—it appeared to me as if a large piece of glass fell on the floor and splattered into pieces.

Q. In the direction of the Commons Chamber?—A. Yes.

Q. That might have been the heavy skylight of the Chamber falling on the desks?—A. I presume that is what it was.

Q. You had to leave the building?—A. Yes, because smoke was coming down the corridors.

Q. What was done with the articles which were removed from the building, of value?—A. They were removed to Colonel Sherwood's office—they were put in that passage opposite the headquarters of the police.

Q. When in the Senate, and joining in the work there, did you hear any explosions?—A. Yes, three or four, one larger than the others.

Q. What was it like?—A. Like a chandelier falling, and several small electric globes bursting simultaneously.

Q. Like the smashing of glass?—A. Yes. There was one point where I noticed water struck a large globe, and it burst with a loud noise. I saw that myself.

Q. How long did you remain at the building that evening?—A. Up till five in the morning.

Q. And you have nothing further to say in regard to it?—A. No, sir.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

WILLIAM L. WOODHUS, duly sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a member of the military police?—A. Yes.

Q. And were present at the fire in question, under the direction of the last witness?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. You were there at the time he came?—A. About the time. I could not say if he got there before me, but I saw him shortly after I got there.

Q. Did you hear any explosions or reports that sounded like explosions?—A. No, sir,—I heard several different reports, but not explosions reports.

Q. Have you had experience in shell fire?—A. No, but I have handled dynamite and blast powder, and nitro-glycerine in the rock work, mining and railroading and rock cuts.

Q. And have you any idea of the noises or what the noises you heard were caused by?—A. Well, it sounded to me the same as the last witness said, that is glass bursting, and like water tanks bursting near hot steam—as near as I could make out.

Q. You heard what Mr. Haycock and Colonel Tashereau about the shell explosions—you never had experience with them?—A. No, sir.

Q. But did they sound to you like dynamite explosions?—A. No, sir, they did not.

Q. Can you say, with your experience, they were not explosions of the character of dynamite, glass powder, or nitro-glycerine?—A. Yes, sir. Dynamite has a very dull report when put off by itself, and jars the ground for several yards around and therefore, I heard none there. Powder and nitro-glycerine blow upwards—if a charge of powder went off there, it would go every place, out through the roof of the building—it has to get an outlet some place, and it would cause a heavy dark smoke, and anybody could detect the difference of the smell of the smoke from ordinary smoke. If dynamite is put off in the day time in the light, it has a very nasty smell, causing headache, and powder gives a heavy black smoke.

Q. Some men are susceptible to those headaches, and cannot work around dynamite?—A. Yes. I know I have suffered myself from headaches very bad.

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Q. You were around there at an early hour in the morning?—A. I returned to the barracks straight from the building, at three o'clock in the morning.

Q. With regard to the rest of the statement of Sergeant-Major Mortimer, you agree that you were engaged in salvaging the goods?—A. Yes, I was placed there by our Sergeant-Major.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

CHARLES GEORGE, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What position do you occupy?—A. Parliamentary Steward.

Q. Were you in the restaurant on the night of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Where is it situated?—A. On the top floor of the new wing.

Q. And you were there when the fire alarm rang?—A. Yes, the electric fire alarm.

Q. What time did that come in?—A. Between five and ten minutes to nine.

Q. Where did you go then, when you first heard the alarm? There was no fire near you?—A. No. I took the elevator, and proceeded to the basement, and ran to the new wing, to the basement hall, that is on the north corridor, and I saw the smoke pouring out of the Speaker's basement door at the staircase that comes up the main corridor.

Q. Was there any flame there?—A. No, just smoke pouring out.

Q. You were able to see along the whole of that north corridor to the south?—A. No, I went up from the basement to the ground floor into the Speaker's main hall—the hall then was a mass of flame.

Q. That is the corridor I referred to—it was a mass of flames when you got there?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Had the fire reached the Speaker's apartment?—A. Yes, sir, it was burning around the door.

Q. In the main hall?—A. Yes.

Q. And you brought up the hose, and played on the flames?—A. Yes.

Q. How did you find the water pressure?—A. Very good.

Q. How long did you continue there?—A. Not more than three or four minutes—I left because I found myself being overcome with smoke.

Q. Was there any difference in the smoke you met there and some ordinary smoke?—A. No, except that it was heavy wood smoke.

Q. And driven away by the smoke, you dropped the hose, and went to the basement?—A. Yes.

Q. Where is your dining room?—A. Underneath the Speaker's dining room in the new wing.

Q. Did you see anybody when you went down there?—A. Yes, Mme. Sévigny and two children, and the nurse—they went back to Mr. Stewart's room in the corner, that is directly opposite the Speaker's kitchen.

Q. And that had an egress to the outside?—A. Yes.

Q. So they were not in danger?—A. Not at all.

Q. You say you asked them to remain there when you saw them, and what did they say?—A. They said they were going to the Chateau in an automobile.

Q. And they went away then?—A. Yes.

Q. Where did you see the Speaker?—A. In his own dining room.

Q. Notwithstanding the flames were severe in the rear corridor, yet you were able to remain in the Speaker's chamber?—A. We had to go up the other way, through the kitchen—through another entrance.

Q. Then, what did you do?—A. I came down and worked with the hose below.

Q. You put on another hose?—A. Yes.

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Q. Who was working with you then?—A. Mr. Desjardins and Mr. Fanning, and half a dozen of the Dominion Police.

Q. Two of those men lost their lives?—A. Yes.

Q. And you worked there until when?—A. Until the walls collapsed.

Q. What walls covered these men?—A. It must have been the rear chamber wall of the Speaker's apartment—the whole thing came down—about 35 feet of debris.

Q. Was Policeman Knox there?—A. Yes.

Q. What did he do?—A. He was there shortly before the cave-in.

Q. How did you escape?—A. After we heard this horrible roar he assisted me.

Q. Did he drag you out?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you see any fire-extinguisher used?—A. Yes, two.

Q. How did they appear to work?—A. Perfectly.

Q. Where were they used?—A. In the lower hall, where we were.

Q. In one of those corridors?—A. Yes, sir. In regard to explosions, I heard Mr. Anderson speak of it this morning—about half past 9 or quarter to 10 there was a section fell between the old and new wing, and some stones—that is directly outside the dining-room door—it was almost an explosion, but I came to the conclusion it was the stone falling on the ground, or a re-echoing that would sound like an explosion.

Q. Some said Mme. Sévigny jumped from the window into the net?—A. That is not true.

Q. Did you see anybody jumping into the net?—A. I was not outside there.

Q. But there was a lady jumped?—A. Yes.

Q. But you do not know who the lady was?—A. It was one of the three guests there.

Q. Outside of that you did not hear any explosion?—A. No, just the falling walls, and the echoing of the noise.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Col. HUGH CLARKE, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Would you be kind enough to tell us what you know about this fire?—A. I was up in my room, 201, Mr. Boyce and I had the same room, with Captain Thomas Wallace, and two gentlemen from the Soo, friends of Mr. Boyce's, when the alarm sounded. Our room is on the top story in the new part, pretty nearly in the opposite direction from the reading room. At first, we thought for a few seconds it was a Division bell, or perhaps the House adjourning, but we heard a commotion outside, and we knew it was a fire alarm, and we rushed out. There was smoke there then, but it was the ordinary smoke, a light gray smoke, so we rushed down the winding stairway. I thought I would go and get my overcoat and rubbers, but when opposite the corridor where the lockers are, I concluded I had better not,—that was the west corridor,—there was a thick black cloud of smoke belching out of that corridor.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. What space of time would elapse from the time you heard the alarm to the time you got to the corridor?—A. Not more than two minutes,—we did not lose any time.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. No.

Q. And I suppose you got out as quickly as you could?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Is there any thing more?—A. No, excepting there is something you want to ask. I saw the fire away from the scene, but I know nothing about the origin.

Q. How soon after hearing the alarm did you notice smoke?—A. Not half a minute—there was smoke outside of my door when I opened it.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The system apparently worked—the alarm was given at 8.57 all over the building at the same time—that was about the time you heard it?—A. Yes.

Q. Anyway when you reached the post office corridor, the flames were bursting out past room 16?—A. I could not say I saw flames, but there was a thick cloud of black smoke, and I could not see any lights—if the lights were on, they were obscured by the thick dense clouds of smoke.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

A. E. HARMAN, sworn, deposed:—

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Are you the Speaker's steward?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you on duty on the evening of the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. What time?—A. 10 to 9 as far as I remember.

Q. And were doing work in the Secretary's office?—A. Yes.

Q. What was the first thing that called your attention to the fire?—A. I heard a shout outside the Speaker's entrance and I got up to open the door, and saw the flames and smoke.

Q. What door?—A. The door leading to the Chamber of the House of Commons.

Q. Leading to the corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. Would that be the door in the angle?—A. No, it is right at the end of the west corridor.

Q. At the north end of the corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. And you were met by the flames and smoke?—A. Yes.

Q. Coming from the direction of the reading-room?—A. Yes.

Q. And had they got around into the west corridor?—A. No, the flames and smoke were then coming from the reading-room, and I then immediately went upstairs, and met the young nurse with the youngest child, and took it out of her arms and brought it downstairs, I think Mme. Sevigny passed me on the stairs, then, and also the Speaker—I handed the little child to Mme. Sevigny in the main hall.

Q. Did you see those two guests?—A. Yes, at the window.

Q. But when you went upstairs first?—A. No, Mme. Sevigny said they were there, three at that time.

Q. And did you make an attempt to get to them?—A. After we came down with the children, but it was impossible to get up the stairs, although the man working with me, Mr. Bingham, did try, and got part of the way up.

Q. That is the waiter?—A. Yes.

Q. But he did not locate these two ladies?—A. No, because we did not know where they were—they were in the long sitting room facing the south on to the courtyard, as we were given to understand, but they were not there.

Q. After you saw the children safely into the drawing room, what did you do?—A. I went out the private entrance of the Speaker to see if any of the ladders were coming up, and I went around to the front, and met the first ladder coming up by the east block, and I brought them around with me, and then Mme. Dusault was sitting on the window sill of one of the rooms, and they got the life net out, and she jumped immediately.

Q. Did you tell them about the others?—A. Yes, right away, and told them the rooms they were in. I saw the ladies entrapped there in that upper room as I came out. The firemen put up their ladder and went up immediately, after Mme. Dussault came down, and I took her into Mr. Stewart's room, and I saw Mme. Sevigny and the children there, and Mr. Nickle was looking after them.

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Q. Did you say the firemen went up on the ladder into the room where these two ladies were who lost their lives—did the firemen succeed in getting to them then?—A. No, sir, not then.

Q. How long would that be after you heard the alarm of fire, to the time the firemen got the ladders up?—A. While catching the lady that jumped, I think the ladders were being put up at the same time.

Q. I understood that—some were holding the net, and the others were putting the ladder up?—A. Yes—the other room where the ladies were was further up than where the lady jumped.

Q. Did the firemen enter the room?—A. Yes, they brought two of the firemen down half suffocated afterwards.

Q. And it was only sometime afterwards that the ladies were brought down?—A. Yes, quite a little time.

Q. What was the delay?—A. They could not find them.

Q. I understand two of the firemen went up the ladder to the window that you pointed out as the room where you had seen the ladies, or did the firemen enter this room where you had seen the ladies?—A. I think they entered the next room.

Q. Anyway they went into one of the windows there?—A. Yes.

Q. And then they sent other firemen to bring those firemen down, as they had become overcome with smoke?—A. Yes.

Q. Then how long after that before the firemen went up who finally brought down those ladies?—A. I could not say exactly, but I should think it was nearly a quarter to ten when the ladies were brought down.

Q. And what time did Mme. Dussault jump?—A. About 9 o'clock, or immediately the firemen came.

Q. Then it would be half an hour or three-quarters of an hour before they recovered them?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there any sign of life in them when they were brought down?—A. I could not say—it is said there was in one, but afterwards they said not. The doctors said to me there was no sign of life at the beginning.

Q. Who was the doctor?—A. Dr. Parent, formerly City Controller.

Q. Mme. Dussault jumped practically at once, while the firemen put up the ladders to try and rescue the other two—would you say all that time, half an hour or three-quarters of an hour was occupied in doing what?—A. I understood when the firemen came down, they said they could not find them—in fact I was told they said there was no one there, and I said I was sure, because I saw them. I said they may have gone into the sitting room. Mr. Speaker and myself went into the courtyard to see if they had jumped out there, but we could find no trace of them there.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I was under the impression these ladies started to make their escape, and for some reason or another they turned back to their room—do you know anything about that?—A. I was told——

Q. Never mind about that, what do you know of the facts?—A. I do not know anything for a fact—Mme. Sévigny was with them at the time—I know that.

Q. Why didn't they follow Mme. Sévigny?—A. I do not know, sir.

Q. Mme. Sévigny had time to make her escape by going downstairs, what door did she come out of?—A. She came down the staircase, and when I left here in the drawing room—there is no fire there yet. She was upstairs at the time of the fire, but she came down.

Q. And these other ladies did not follow her?—A. Not quickly enough.

Q. Then Mme. Sévigny and her guests were all upstairs where their bedrooms were, and Mme. Sévigny came down the stairs to the drawing room, and these ladies

did not follow her, evidently?—A. No, sir. I understand they went back for their furs, but I do not know.

Q. Then almost immediately after the stairs filled with smoke?—A. Yes.

Q. And it was almost impossible to get out?—A. Yes.

Q. And they were left upstairs in this room?—A. Yes.

Q. And Mme. Dussault was there, too?—A. Yes.

Q. And she got to her window and jumped, and her life was saved?—A. Yes.

Q. And the other two were in another room, and that is the room you pointed out to the brigade, and they hoisted their ladder, and came back and said they could not find them?—A. Yes. I think they went into a room on this side of the room they were in.

Q. Were there any fire escapes from that floor?—A. Yes, from the room they were in, and also the next room.

Q. It was said in the evidence here, that these windows had been painted lately, and there would be a difficulty in opening them?—A. I know the windows were stiff, because Mme. Sévigny had asked me several times to go and open them for her.

Q. But what caused them to be stiff?—A. I could not say.

Q. The recent painting?—A. I could not say, that, or the dampness.

Q. Was it a double window?—A. Yes. We never take it out.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Did these windows slip up and down?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you notice whether the firemen had smoke helmets when they went up first?—A. I did not see any.

Q. You know what smoke helmets are?—A. I would know them.

Q. Did you see any that night?—A. No, sir.

Q. When they went up the second time, did you?—A. I did not notice any.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You saw the women after being brought down?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you notice that their wrists were cut?—A. Yes, their hands. You can see to-day where the glass is broken, where there is blood on the glass and curtains—you can see where they held them.

Q. That room was not burnt?—A. No, sir. Neither the room they were in or the room that Mme. Dussault was in.

Q. Was that an adjoining room to the other one?—A. No, a bedroom and a bathroom between them—in all probability closed the door, and kept the smoke from it. It is not as badly smoked as the others.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. As far as you know, they never came down the stairway?—A. No, sir, they never left the upstairs room.

Q. They may have remained to get their things, but they did not come out from there.—A. I understood the firemen said one of them had the furs wrapped around her face, when they found her. Her furs were all soaked and wet in that bedroom too.

Q. The fire spread rapidly?—A. Very.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. There is something said about a passageway from the top of the reading room to the Speaker's apartment—a partition of recent erection?—A. No, sir, there is nothing down there.

Q. How long were you there?—A. Since 1911.

Q. Then you evidently do not know about this—now, after the bodies were recovered, or was Mme. Sevigny there when the bodies were recovered?—A. No, she had gone.

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Q. And the Speaker.—A. He had gone too.

Q. After recovery of the bodies, what did you do?—A. I was taking down oil painting, all we could from the main hall, and started to save the property.

Q. You saw Mr. George the last witness?—A. Yes.

Q. And you heard what he said; he said you assisted until the fall of the wall.—A. Yes.

Q. Did you notice any explosions?—A. No, sir, nothing at all, except when the wall flew out from the Chamber into the courtyard—it might sound like an explosion to some.

Q. But you did not think so?—A. No, because we knew what it was.

Q. And you were there when this wall fell and buried these men?—A. Yes.

Q. When did you leave the building?—A. About 4.30 in the morning.

Q. And what time did you come back?—A. About half past six. I just went home to change.

Q. Did you go through the Speaker's apartments?—A. Yes, up the fire escape, and through the rooms.

Q. Alone?—A. Alone first, and then Mr. Speaker came along after, and General Fiset, and we went through together.

Q. And recovered certain effects of Mme. Sevigny?—A. Yes, money and jewellery.

Q. And that was the time you found the furs of Mme. Morin lying there?—A. Yes.

Q. Was there a fire escape from that room in which the two ladies were?—A. Yes, and also from the next room to it.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

FRED BINGHAM, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a waiter in the Speaker's Chambers?—A. Yes.

Q. You were there on the evening in question?—A. Yes, sitting in the pantry at the time.

Q. Your work is under the last witness?—A. Yes.

Q. What drew your attention first to the fire?—A. When I walked through the dining room, I heard shouting outside, but did not take much notice at first, because it was an ordinary occurrence, but when I looked out about 10 to 9 I saw the smoke coming down the stairs.

Q. And did you see into the main corridor?—A. The fire was bursting through the Speaker's hall door.

Q. You saw the last witness? Did you see the Speaker?—A. Yes. And Mme. Sevigny and the nurse and two children all coming downstairs together.

Q. Did you say you were told that Mme. Bray and Mme. Morin were upstairs?—Yes, by the Speaker.

Q. Did you make any attempt to reach them?—A. Yes, I went right up.

Q. Did you get into the room?—A. I thought they were in, what we call Madame's parlour, but they were not.

Q. And why did you come back down?—A. The smoke was too dense—if I had not come down, I would not have come down.

Q. It was impossible for you to go any further?—A. The trouble was I did not know where they were.

Q. Did you fall?—A. I may have, but I do not remember.

Q. Then you broke a window?—A. Yes, in the parlour. I did that to get air for myself.

Q. When you had to come downstairs?—A. Yes. And Mr. Fanning and I tried to get up again, but the lights were all out, we could not see what we were doing.

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We then took a lantern up, but I do not know whether it was the smoke put it out, but that certainly went out.

Q. You were there when the bodies were brought down?—A. Yes, I did not go out of the quarters, until quarter past four in the morning.

Q. Were you outside when the ladies were brought down?—A. No, I was beside our kitchen door.

Q. Were you at work with the two Desjardins and Mr. Fanning?—A. Yes, we were all working on the same thing when the wall fell.

Q. Did you hear any explosion?—A. None whatever.

Q. I suppose there was considerable noise when the wall came down?—A. Yes, when the tower came down.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

W. G. THOMPSON, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Regarding these desks, there are electric lights in them?—A. Yes.

Q. How was that wiring brought up—in conduits?—A. In a steel conduit, I think.

Q. Would there be any possibility of fire starting from those wires?—A. Not to my knowledge—I should think not.

Q. If they were in steel conduits?—A. It would be utterly impossible.

Q. I just wanted to see if there was any possibility of it starting from defective wiring?—A. It would be impossible, utterly impossible.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. If the fire did start from these, would it put out the light?—A. Yes, immediately—they would have to send for me right away.

Q. How did it come that the lights went out?—A. I do not know about that—Mr. Wilson can say about that, it was him that put them on again.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

FREDERICK A. WILSON, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. To clear up a point—you heard what Mr. Thompson said with regard to the wiring of the electric lights on the desks?—A. Yes, but I never was in that room only once—we had not rewired that part.

Q. It is said the lights went out in an early part of the fire, and were put on again by you—some report has reached us that you merely turned the switch on again?—A. Yes, there is a main switch controlling all the lights in that building. It is a circuit with separate fans for each branch, and the heavier one in the new wing, and when that was turned, the extra current blew out the main switch, and I closed it again.

Q. Somebody may have turned out the lights?—A. It was done altogether accidentally. The switch tripped out automatically. It was there for that purpose, to prevent short circuiting.

Q. What created the short circuit?—A. It would be where the voltage would raise high. It was the main feeder supplying the lights.

Q. And the lights went out as if they had been turned off?—A. Yes.

Q. When the wire short circuited, it automatically shuts off the switch?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. That is a feature of safety to protect your apparatus?—A. Yes.

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By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. The minute that switch is tripped, then there is no danger from those wires?
—A. Absolutely none.

Q. The electric current is shut off from those wires?—A. Yes.

Q. That is the object—it trips automatically and shuts off the electricity from the wires?—A. Yes.

By His Honour Judge Mactavish:

Q. How long were the lights out?—A. About ten minutes. I was in the new wing, and I went around by the Senate side.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. The short circuit having occurred, and this automatic trip working, and throwing the electricity off, when you put it on again, does not the short circuit occur?—A. No, I will explain that. There are 48 circuits feeding from the main automatic switch—each one has a fuse, and the total load being on, and one of the heavy circuits had a short circuit come in on it, and the extra current, before it had time to blow its own fuse, tripped the main circuit again, but it does not blow like the circuit breaker, and when I closed it, I heard the fuse clicking, and I thought it was the new wing circuit. That part of the building was burning.

Q. The part that created the short circuit, the lights there did not go on again?—A. No, that section was cut out.

By His Honour Judge Mactavish:

Q. Did the short circuit put out all the lights?—A. Yes, for those few minutes.

Q. Whose duty is it to see that the lights were on and kept on?—A. That comes under the Superintendent of Public Buildings.

Q. Not you?—A. No, not me.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

CHARLES MCCARTHY: sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Were you one of the firemen who went up to rescue the women?—A. I was.

Q. Who gave you the information as to what room they were in?—A. I could not vouch for that but I was told it was the Speaker's.

Q. You heard this witness who spoke about you going up?—A. No, sir.

Q. Were you one of the two first who went up there?—A. I was.

Q. Who was the first to get through the window?—A. I cannot say whether it was I or Mr. Shiner who was with me—he was on a ladder and opposite me at the next window.

Q. So you went in through from separate windows?—A. Yes.

Q. In by separate windows?—A. Yes in the first place—afterwards Mr. Shiner returned from his ladder and came up my ladder.

Q. When you went in first you had to break your way through?—A. Yes—raise the window—there were two windows on but I cannot say whether there was an outside window or not.

Q. At any rate you got into the building—and did you both go into the same room?—A. Yes, both windows led to the same room.

Q. Could you say how many windows you were from the northwest corner of the building?—A. No, but approximately about five.

Q. You made a search for the ladies?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Did you call to them?—A. Yes, as soon as we entered the room we called out, "is there anybody there," but got no answer.

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Q. What was the condition of the smoke then?—A. Very serious, in my opinion.

Q. Did you go back again?—A. Yes, I returned to the ground and the Chief put a smoke helmet on me.

Q. First you went up without a smoke helmet, you and Mr. Shiner, and then the Chief put a smoke helmet on you?—A. Yes.

Q. And on Shiner?—A. No, sir.

Q. Did you both go up?—A. Yes, on the same ladder. I having the helmet preceded him into the room. The room was in a more serious condition then but I could not see or feel the smoke owing to the helmet.

Q. Did you try to get into any other room?—A. We got as far as the room next door but you could not see your hand before you.

Q. You could not say whether it was a bath-room or an ordinary bed-room?—A. No; the first room was a bed-room, for I saw a bed there.

Q. How long did you remain there?—A. I could not say.

Q. How did you get out again?—A. I remember coming to the window and that is the end of my story.

Q. Did you become unconscious?—A. I did. I do not remember coming down the ladder. I remember trying to get to the window but that is all I remember.

Q. Then you were not one of the firemen who finally rescued the women?—A. No, sir.

Q. How long did you remain there?—A. I could not say.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Do you know what time that was?—A. When entering the building first I recalled hearing the whistles blowing at Hull—I think it was for nine o'clock.

Q. Then it would be a little after nine that the attempt was made to rescue them?—A. It was about nine o'clock in the first place.

Q. You do not know about the subsequent entry of the room?—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

OMER DAOUST, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are a fireman and were at the fire in question and were one of the men who finally went up and got the bodies of the ladies?—A. Yes.

Q. It was after Mr. McCarthy got down—how did you get in?—A. He jumped through the window and caught Shiner's arm and we both brought him down, and then the Chief told me to go up.

Q. Did you have a smoke helmet?—A. No.

Q. Did you go up?—A. Yes.

Q. Did you go into the room?—A. Yes—I went up the fire escape.

Q. What did you do?—A. I went into a room and it was bad with smoke and I came back and the Chief said: allright, there is a man going up, and we went into the room, and I could not see with smoke, and searched over the room and found we were in the hallway and the flames were coming up the stairway and the carpets were on fire, and we took a stream up and put out the fire and went into the room and that is how we got the women.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Was the room that McCarthy went into—was this the same room that you found the ladies in?—A. No, it was the third room—it was the third room on the left-hand side.

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By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. It was only after you got the hose up and played it on the fire at the head of the stairs that you got the bodies?—A. Yes.

Q. Who was with you?—A. Mr. Shiner.

, Q. When McCarthy came down was he overcome with smoke?—A. Yes, he was unconscious.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. What condition were the ladies in when you rescued them?—A. One was on the head of the sofa and the other at the end of the sofa.

Q. Had one of them anything on her head?—A. No, the one on her side was at the head of the sofa and the other at the end of the sofa.

Q. Had they any furs or anything in their arms?—A. Not that I know of.

Q. At any rate you got them out immediately on finding them and every attempt was made to bring them back to life?—A. Yes.

Q. What doctor was there?—A. I do not know—I did not see any doctor.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

E. K. WAGNER, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are in the Auditor General's office?—A. Yes, I am a clerk there.

Q. Your office is in the Eastern Block?—A. Yes.

Q. Were you there the night of the fire?—A. No, I was at home, 79 Waverley street.

Q. Did you go to the fire?—A. Yes, I got there about 25 after nine.

Q. How long did you remain there?—A. I went to my room in the East Block, on the third floor, and crossed over to room 34, which was facing the fire—I watched the fire from there.

Q. Did you hear any explosions?—A. Yes, while there I heard five explosions or glass falling.

Q. Between what time?—A. Between 9.25 and 10.

Q. All between that time?—A. Yes, after that I heard three while outside.

Q. How many did you hear between 9.30 and 10?—A. Five.

Q. And three between 10 and 11?—A. Yes.

Q. I suppose you are not an expert in explosions?—A. Yes.

Q. You were looking at the building at the time?—A. Yes, I only saw the effect of two when outside on the centre walk—one of them the lights went out just at the explosion—it appeared to be under the main tower—the lights facing Wellington street from east to west went out.

Q. You saw no sudden outburst?—A. One of the blasts I did—a piece of roof 9 or 10 feet square went up 10 feet in the air.

Q. What time would that be?—A. Between 10 and 11.

Q. What part of the roof would that be?—A. I was standing on the centre of main walk and it would appear a little east of the main tower—about half way between the main tower and the Library tower, it went up 10 feet and fell back in the shape of dust—that was the loudest of any of them.

Q. That would be between 10 and 11?—A. Yes. I have three suggestions to make—I would like the top floor of the Eastern Block to have a rope for each window and also I think alien enemies should report to some building that is not so important as the East Block.

Q. What do you mean by that?—A. Well, the alien enemies, the Germans and the Austrians that are on parole report at certain periods to the police.

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Q. That is to the Chief of the Dominion Police?—A. Yes. They have to come in and go through the East Block, and I have seen some of them getting out and they wander around and do not go straight out.

Q. And you are in that block?—A. Yes, and I think if a cheaper property could be secured it would be a better place for them to report. The chief is away on the north corner of the new wing there and it is a hard place to get in.

Q. How do they get in—are they in charge of an officer?—A. No, they come right in.

Q. They are absolutely free and come in to report?—A. Yes.

Q. And you say you have seen them prowling around that building?—A. Yes; not lately, though, I think since the fire there is a civilian that accompanies the people from the main entrance.

Q. Were there any of the Germans or Austrians around about February 3?—A. I do not know.

Q. When did you see any of them last around the East Block?—A. I have seen them this winter.

Q. Have you seen any since the fire?—A. I saw five or six men go up on the roof one day.

Q. Since the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Who were these men?—A. I reported it to the Commissioner and he said it was men he had sent there to take down a hose that had been laid the night of the fire on the roof of the Block.

Q. Were they any of the enemy out on parole?—A. I do not know—they were men dressed in overalls.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. We are very glad to get this suggestion—it is very important especially in regard to safety appliances for the employees of the top story of that building—are there any ropes or anything there now?—A. Nothing. It is too far to jump. There used to be a fire escape until they built the new wing, but I think they tore it down.

Q. That is the building where the vaults are and the Minister of Finance?—A. Yes.

Q. And that is the block where these men were allowed to stroll about?—A. Yes. And it was said last summer they found some dynamite in the East Block.

Q. Was there anything in that?—A. Well, it was published in the newspapers and I understand there was a man suspended during the summer over it.

Q. I have not heard anything about that dynamite?—A. I am not sure but I am satisfied it was found there.

Mr. PARKINSON: There were a few sticks of dynamite brought in there by the contractor's man and delivered to the foreman and he left it there overnight. It was wanted to blow an old timber down the next day.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. It is a bad place to store dynamite?—A. Yes, they got into serious trouble over it—he was dismissed. But as regards those aliens they report to the city police here.

Q. I do not care who they report to but I think Mr. Wagner is quite right to call the attention of this Commission to this matter—it is a critical time to have these men, if even on parole, to be prowling around those buildings.

Mr. PARKINSON: Those coming up to show their cards, and those men whom the witness reported as Germans on the roof were found to be men that had been sent there by the Commissioner.

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By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Is there anything further, Mr. Wagner?—A. There is another thing, I think the firemen should see two of the rooms in the attic—they are stored there with files of newspapers for a long time—the material there belongs to the Governor General, and the place is locked except just when the orderly is in there. A fire there might burn and burn and there is no one who might detect it—there is a place also where the Secretary of State stores papers, and it is never used only when the clerks might be going in and out but people smoking might start fires there—it is a menace and I think should be cleared out, and I think the rule for smoking should be more rigidly enforced. To-day at noon, there was a man with a pipe in the employ of the Dominion Police going around doing his work while smoking, and last night at 5 o'clock when going out, I saw a man with a cigarette talking to the policeman at the door.

Q. There is a rule of "No smoking"?—A. Yes, but not in force. Since the fire in the West block in 1898 there was a rule, but not enforced.

Q. After that fire there was a rule of no smoking?—A. Yes, but it is not enforced.

Q. The suggestions you make are: First that there should be some provision and proper means of escape from the upper stories of the East block?—A. Yes, and I think a rope would be safer, to keep it inside.

Q. And the second suggestion is that the alien enemy even if on parole should not be permitted to enter that building, and the third is that the rules in regard to smoking should be enforced, and as you suggest that an inspection be made of the two storerooms in order to prevent fires?—A. Yes. I think those two rooms are a menace to the whole building.

Q. Are there many officials on that upper story?—A. Not now—the Indian Department has moved out—there is the Secretary of State and the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Q. How many are there in your department up there?—A. About twenty.

Q. And in the event of fire no means of escape?—A. Just the stairways, and it is all wooden partitions and wooden floors, and the lathing is a large wide lath, and the attic would burn very rapidly. There would be nothing to prevent it burning immediately.

And furthermore witness depóseth not.

GEORGE ALDCROFT, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. What is your occupation?—A. Salesman.

Q. You wrote a letter to the *Evening Journal* on February 17?—A. Yes.

Q. In that letter you say you were present at the fire and became interested in the efforts of one or two firemen assisted by soldiers to attach one of the new motor machines to hydrant, and after 15 minutes or so the efforts were given up as the fitting would not fit the hydrant—what do you say as to that?—A. Just exactly what I say—it was rather a peculiar thing that the attachment could not be made.

Q. Was the attachment subsequently made?—A. Not at that hydrant—it was given up and the machine was backed up out of the ground.

Q. Were you there afterwards when a similar machine was attached to coupling there in the presence of Mr. Parkinson and Mr. Giroux?—A. Yes, but Mr. Giroux produced a couple of small hose, and it seemed to fit perfectly—whether the same kind as used on the large section of the same engine, I could not say.

Q. It was tried on the city hydrant?—A. Yes.

Q. And found to work all right?—A. Yes.

Q. Answer this: You said you would write the *Journal* and take it back?—A. I did.

Q. Did you write it?—A. Yes.

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Q. Has it been published?—A. No.

Q. When did you write it?—A. I mailed it yesterday morning.

And furthermore witness deposeth.

Mr. GIROUX, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You went with Inspector Parkinson and the last witness to try a coupling on a hydrant which he had pointed out as the one he referred to in his letter to the *Journal*?—A. Yes.

Q. Is that coupling the same?—A. Yes, the Ottawa standard coupling.

Q. And the same used on the machine referred to?—A. Yes, the same as the city and Government hydrant—the 2½-inch standard coupling.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

(The investigation thereupon adjourned until 10.30 a.m. next day, Wednesday, February 23, 1916.)

OTTAWA, February 23, 1916.

Pursuant to adjournment the investigation was resumed at 10.30 a.m.

Sir THOMAS WHITE, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. It is just as well if you make a statement yourself, Sir Thomas?—A. Yes. I was late in going up to the House on the night of the fire. I think I reached my room about twenty minutes or a quarter to nine—at least, that is my recollection. I left my hat and coat, and came to my room, which was immediately behind the Chamber and opposite the reading room—No. 19. I did not go into the House immediately, but went into the reading room and was reading the Toronto papers for a brief time. My recollection is that they were on the second shelf from the House of Commons' entrance into the reading room, at the first desk, so I would be reading at the first desk at the shelf furthest from the House of Commons' entrance to the reading room. Mr. Northrup was opposite me—whether he was there when I came in I am unable to say, but at all events, I observed him on the opposite side of the desk, and I do not recall that I saw any one else in the reading room, although it is possible and probable others were in there. No one was smoking in the reading room, at least to my observation.

Q. You were not smoking yourself?—A. No, nor Mr. Northrup, and I may say that I do not remember ever seeing any one smoking in there—that is a little irrelative, possibly, but after reading the papers for a minute or two, the Hon. Dr. Reid came along through the entrance to the reading room, in company with Mr. Downey, and asked me to go into his room. I left the desk and joined them, and went into Dr. Reid's room, which opens off the passage in the reading room leading from the House of Commons corridor to the Senate corridor.

Q. We have you on the list as room 24 and not 19?—A. At all events, it is immediately behind the House of Commons and opposite the reading room. I do not know the number of Dr. Reid's.

Q. His room is No. 29 on the plan?—A. Well, I went into that room, and I think I might have been in there six or seven minutes possibly—less than ten minutes and a little more than five—at least that is my recollection. Then I left Dr. Reid and went to the door to proceed to the House, and as I went to the door, or immediately afterwards, the bell began to ring, and I said to Dr. Reid: "Why, there is no division,

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what does this mean, the bells are ringing," and as I said that, I observed over at the end of the room—that would be the west end of the reading room—flames jumping, and I said to Dr. Reid: "Fire," and he came at once, of course. I started to go through to my room, but the fire spread with such extraordinary rapidity that I saw I would be burned if I proceeded, and I turned and went out by the Senate corridor, and my recollection is that Dr. Reid accompanied me or came shortly afterwards. The fire burst into a very fierce flame, mounting up rapidly—rather red in colour—the colour of a flame of a pine stump burning, or pine as if resinous; a fierce flame and hot. I heard no explosions, either then or afterwards. I went then down the Senate corridor, to the southern entrance, and there were a number of people there, and Dr. Clarke came out—he had been almost stifled by the flames—and said there were four or five members in the Chamber, and two or three of us, including my half-brother and myself, tried to make our way towards the House of Commons Chamber, with the idea of assisting them if we could, but such was the rapidity and spread of the fire that the smoke was coming down the corridor, and we found it quite impossible to proceed.

Q. That would be the western corridor?—A. Yes, that is the corridor through which I usually go to my room from the House of Commons. I pass Room 16. I likened it then, I remember, to a horizontal chimney, and we could not make any headway at all. Then I came back to the Senate corridor, and they had the hose laid and they were playing it upon the base of the flame, and I thought at first they would succeed in putting it out, but on looking out the window of the Senate corridor, where I could see through the reading room, I observed the fire seemed to make headway, and the flames were then shooting out through the skylight, and I then came to the conclusion that there was a very serious danger of the building going. I think that is substantially all I know of it.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You were quite sure when in the reading room you saw no one smoking?—A. I am positive.

Q. Mr. Northrop was not and Mr. Glass—you are sure he was not?—A. No, I observed only Mr. Northrup there—it is possible, of course, Mr. Glass was there—Mr. Northrup was not smoking, nor I.

Q. At that time you detected no evidence of smoke or fire?—A. Not the slightest.

Q. When you went to Dr. Reid's room you were only there a few minutes?—A. Five or six minutes.

Mr. WHITE: It practically corresponds with the evidence of the other witnesses.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Mr. W. G. WEICHEL, M.P., sworn, deposed:

Gentlemen, I wish to make a statement regarding an incident which took place in the reading room of the House of Commons on the Tuesday preceding the fire. On that day I had with me as a guest, Colonel Lockhead, of the 118th Battalion. He is the commander of the 118th Battalion of Berlin, Ont., or of North Waterloo. Colonel Lockhead had lunched with me in the House of Commons restaurant somewhere between 1.30 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon. After lunch we walked out of the restaurant, walked up to the cigar stand, and I bought two cigars which we lighted there, taking the elevator down to the main floor. We walked along the corridor into Room 16, and sat down to have a quiet chat and smoke. We had been there for 15 minutes or so, when my friend Lockhead referred to a certain resolution which had been passed by the Berlin Board of Trade regarding certain matters which had taken place in their city some few weeks ago. Not having heard of this resolution, or having read

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it personally, I suggested that we go to the reading room and see the two daily papers, that is the *Berlin Daily News Record*, and the *Berlin Telegraph*—they were on the last stand before you reach the corridor into the library. The *Berlin News Record* was the last newspaper on the third stand from the entrance into the House of Commons. My friend Lockhead was reading the *Telegraph* and I was reading the *Daily News Record*, when I felt a slight heat about my feet and left knee—I unconsciously put my hand down to feel what was the matter, when I felt more of the heat coming in contact with my hand, when I looked down, and at the same time Colonel Lockhead did, and we saw that one of the country newspapers in one of the lower shelves, about two feet from the floor was slightly burning, on its surface—there was a flame that possibly would not cover any more than your two hands—it was immediately pulled out and thrown on the floor, and we stepped on it and put the fire out, and the caretaker happened to be there immediately afterwards, and he helped to stamp the fire out with us. In fact there was not much fire, and it did not take much stamping to put it out. The caretaker was there, and no doubt he will substantiate what I am saying now.

Q. Is there anything further you desire to say?—A. Immediately after the fire was out we left the building,

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. I might state here, the moment I was appointed on this Commission, Mr. Weichel came to me and told me what occurred, and said he desired to make a statement, and I said we would be glad to have it. I think just at that moment Mr. Weichel was leaving for home, and he asked when we would sit again, and said he could not be back on that day, but would be back on the following day.

Mr. WHITE: I would like to say also that immediately on reaching here, Mr. Weichel met me and made practically the same statement.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Were you smoking at the time?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. You were both smoking?—A. At least we were smoking in Room 16—we walked down the corridor and went into the reading room and stayed there about 5 minutes and then this instance happened.

Q. You may not have been smoking, but you had the cigars in your hands?—A. Yes.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The fire was in between the shelves?—A. Yes, sir, that is about two feet down,—it would perhaps be about the beam.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

COLONEL LOCKHEAD, of the 118 Battalion, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Do you corroborate what was said by your friend?—A. Yes, everything—there was one little question—he said it was a resolution of the Board of Trade, but it was a resolution of the Trades and Labour Council. If my recollection serves me right, the shelf from which I pulled the paper out was not more than a foot from the floor, that is my recollection—but in everyway I corroborate the evidence of Mr. Weichel. We did not take long to put the fire out.

Q. It was prompt action?—A. Yes. It did not amount to anything, I remember putting my foot on the flooring and it felt like composition flooring. I would just say that I made the same statement as Mr. Weichel. In speaking about it afterwards I said I would be glad to come to Ottawa and make this statement, and that is the reason I am here.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

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Mr. JOHN H. FISHER, M.P., sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You have heard the evidence of Mr. Weichel, M.P., and Colonel Lockhead?—

A. Yes.

Q. Do you corroborate it?—A. Well, perhaps I might say what I know of the matter—I went into the reading room, as I was in the habit of going over to see the Brantford papers—I presume it was two or three minutes before the fire, that these gentlemen spoke about. The Brantford papers are on the first stand as you enter the reading room from the House of Commons corridor, and I was reading them when I heard a little commotion further down. When I first went in there, I saw Mr. Weichel and Colonel Lockhead—whom I met for the first time that morning—standing four or five desks down—I came to the conclusion they were looking at the Berlin papers, because they were interesting to them then. I noticed a little commotion down there, but I did not know what happened, but came to the conclusion that it was a fire. I saw Mr. Weichel and Colonel Lockhead and one of the attendants there at the time, that is really all I know. I did not see any blaze or anyone smoking.

Q. You did not see any Brantford papers burning?—A. No.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Col. A. P. SHERWOOD, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are Chief Commissioner of the Dominion Police and have been so for many years?—A. Yes.

Q. For how many?—A. Nearly 34.

Q. Have you prepared any report on this?—A. I have not—I really have not had time, nor time to follow the evidence.

Q. Well probably you can tell us what arrangements were made for the patrolling of the Main Building and House of Commons during the Session?—A. Yes. The House of Commons and the Senate so far as inside protection goes is under the charge of those bodies. They have their own watchman for fire protection and for the protection generally they are responsible and always have assumed it.

Q. They claimed the right?—A. Exactly. Now, when the war broke out, the Session immediately after the war—after a talk with the Prime Minister, he arranged an interview between the two Speakers and myself in reference to this very question, that is the protection of the buildings from outside trouble. I saw Mr. Speaker Landry and interviewed the Chief Messenger of the Senate, Mr. Charlton, and I told him that I was ready to afford any number of policemen for any protection that was considered necessary. We talked over matters, and I suggested the advisability of closing all but one of the entrances. I told them I proposed to have five plain clothes men if they did not want men in uniform. Mr. Charlton said he was quite able to protect the building with his staff, and it was left at that. I did however, have plain clothes men on duty there during the Session, and that was continued throughout the subsequent Sessions—I saw then, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Dr. Sproule, who had with him the Sergeant-at-Arms, the responsible officer for the carrying out of the duties, I understand, and we went into matters—the fact of the matter is it was left with the Sergeant-at-Arms to arrange what was necessary. The guard then was considerably strengthened—it is not necessary for me to go into details, and one of my officers can tell you exactly what was placed there. But I may say I gave Colonel Smith—I rather forced upon him more protection than he really thought was necessary. When these men are detained to the House in that way, they are subject to the order and direction of the Sergeant-at-Arms—it is very undesirable to have duplication of responsibilities, and therefore when they went up there, the Sergeant reported anything out of the way to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and took his orders accordingly. Of course, these same reports

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would come to me—with regard to the fire appliances in the building—that is looked after and taken care of by a staff of reliable constables under Inspector Giroux who has proved himself of great worth in long period of service in various capacities in the Dominion Police Force. I may say he has made a study of this question—he advised the installation of the May-Oatway system of fire protection, and upon consultation with the Deputy Minister of Public Works, I went to Toronto with the Chief Electrician of the Government, and witnessed a test of it, and satisfied myself it was a good thing, and it was installed first in the House of Commons and in the reading room and in the immediate precincts of the two Houses, and only carried into effect subsequently in the Departmental building—the first installation was put in where we considered it most vulnerable. The protection of course of the other buildings owned and controlled by the Government—

Mr. WHITE: I do not suppose that concerns the inquiry?

WITNESS: No. Coming to the night of the fire, I am afraid I cannot enlighten you very much in regard to it because I was not there until some fifteen minutes after the fire started. I came from the west end of the city, when I got notice from my office that there was a fire there, and went into the office of the Sergeant-at-Arms, and found him busy collecting valuables, and uncertain whether he should move them. I told him in my opinion he should, as I fully expected his place to suffer from what I saw of it. I expected his place to go, and I had the doors of the East block opened up and my own office corridors opened up by a policeman put on there, so the salvage from his building and the Senate and other places could be stored readily. That was in the East block, and all the corridors there were filled. I was there until after five o'clock in the morning, and as soon as I saw no danger of it spreading further I left.

Q. You found on your arrival that your men were there?—A. Yes.

Q. How many men would there be ordinarily detailed for service in the building?—A. I would rather not say myself, but that will show in the detailed statement. Mr. Kennedy understands that. But I might mention, that I have seen something in the paper about the possibility of placing explosives in the air conduits, and I want to say that this situation was effectively taken care of in July last, when after a thorough examination of the whole building the air conduits were all closed up, and made impossible of entrance from the outside in any way. Those that were not actually in use we bricked up—those that were used for the purpose of bringing in the air were double-bricked, and had an iron grating so that no one could get in there, nor could anything be inserted or put in. At the same time the doors of all the buildings were closed, leaving but one entrance—that was the intention of the Government, but it was found to be inconvenient, and a second entrance was left in the West block, but a policeman put there. Of course, my contention is that one entrance is of great necessity for efficient protection—every entrance you leave open, although you protect it with a constable, you add to the hazard greatly, because if one entrance and one man responsible and knows he is responsible, he takes very much more interest and sees the people who pass there are correct, because he knows the responsibility can be placed on him for anything that goes wrong.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. While just there, do you know about that door leading to the basement—I think it is on the north side of the building?—A. Of what building?

Q. I think it is the new part of the House of Commons?—A. Yes, it is probably in the Speaker's quarters. As I said before, we have nothing to do with it—they protect their own doors.

Q. The reason is, I was informed, that that door was generally open, and leading into the basement and one going in there would take the stairs or elevator and get access?—A. That should not be so—all those doors should have been kept closed, and as regards the back place or where they put in coal, that will be explained by my

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acting sergeant-major. We put a man on duty there when those grill gates were opened to see that nobody had access to the back premises. To show you that a policeman's life is not a happy one, as Gilbert Sullivan has said, and it is popular to put the blame on the police where nobody else can be found for it—at the time of the outrage caused by the blowing up of the bridge at Vanceboro, I sent a circular to every police department in Canada, a copy of which I will put in here:—

OTTAWA, February 3, 1915.

SIR,—In view of the recent outrage at Vanceboro, Maine, it would appear that we have genuine reason to fear similar occurrences at other points, and I would earnestly request that you would instruct all officers under your command to use extra vigilance and give special surveillance to all suspicious strangers, with a view to their detention for investigation, if circumstances warrant it.

I have the honour to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

A. P. SHERWOOD,

Chief Commissioner of Police.

(Letter filed as Exhibit No. 16.)

At the time of the closing of all these doors, it was in July when the Sergeant-at-Arms was not there, and I sent the following to the chief messenger:—

July 12, 1915.

Memorandum for PETER CONNELLY, Esq.,

House of Commons, Ottawa.

In view of alarming report received, the Government decided in Council, a couple of days ago, that only one door should be made use of in entering and leaving public buildings, until further orders. In the case of the Parliament Buildings themselves, the door will be the main tower door, where a policeman will be stationed. All others should be kept locked, so that strangers may not have an opportunity to enter.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE.

(Memorandum filed as Exhibit No. 17.)

To show that the status of the police and the officials of the House of Commons and the Senate, when the Parliament closed last session, so that there should be no mistake, I sent to the Clerk of the Senate and the House of Commons, the following memorandum:—

OTTAWA, April 16, 1915.

Memorandum for:

The Clerks of the Senate and House of Commons.

During recess I propose to revert to the duty done by the Police during last Recess, that is, having a Constable on the Main door inside the House on such days as it is open to the public, which I understand is to be from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. From the time of the closing of the doors, I understand, that the Senate and Commons officials will be responsible for inside protection.

A. P. SHERWOOD,

Chief Commissioner of Police.

Please initial here if satisfactory.

E. Roch, (no objection).

T. B. Flint, (no objection).

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(Memorandum filed as Exhibit No. 18.)

There has been a great deal said, and I do not know whether I should go into it or not, but there has been a great deal said about the substituting of firemen for the police in the building. I do not know whether you care to hear my views upon this subject, but I would be very glad to show how it came by, and that people are not in a position to think just the right way about it. Am I at liberty to do it?

Commissioner PRINGLE: Quite so.

A. I think there has been a good deal of criticism about the police and firemen, which might have been better left unsaid—way back in 1913, I made the following remark to the Minister of Public Works:—

MAY 30, 1913.

Memorandum for

The Minister of Public Works.

Enclosed are two clippings from the *Free Press* of May 22, regarding fire protection on the Public Buildings, also a report to me of the Sergeant in Charge of the Fire Protection Service in regard thereto. Further I may say that each one of the 100 and odd men on the Police Force is fully instructed in handling the fire fighting equipment. The Chief's scheme as outlined is quite unnecessary, it would be quite inadvisable to have any body of men in the Government Buildings after hours other than the Police, as divided responsibility is usually fatal and would always be vexatious and productive of friction.

CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE.

(Memorandum filed as Exhibit No. 19.)

In addition to this, reason shows that a policeman or a watchman is trained to be observant and alert, and would be better than an ordinary person, and even better than a fireman to quickly grasp any thing unusual—their very training makes them so. The firemen are fire-fighters and not fire-sleuths, as I take it—there is no public building in the country that I know of, or in England that is patrolled by firemen—all are patrolled by policemen or watchmen, because they are trained, their minds are trained to that purpose, by long years at the avocation. The observation that firemen would have seen or noticed the different fires that have taken place in the public buildings would not seem to me to be borne out by the facts. The West block fire occurred in the afternoon, when the place was filled with clerks, when no patrol would be going on, because the rooms are never entered when the public service is at work. The Langevin Block fire started on either side of the partition in the attic, in a large room where there were a great number of clerks employed. They never noticed the smoke or smell, and it remained for a passer-by on the street, to notice the flame crawling out of the room. This also occurred in the afternoon between 3 and 4 o'clock.

In regard to my attitude in the matter, I may say that I noticed some statement about the West Block Fire, and I have a letter here which I wrote to the Secretary of the Board of Control, I think it was in regard to a communication I had, and I will put in my letter, if I may, just because it was written at the time.

“January 27, 1916.

“H. L. HOWE, Esq.,

“Secretary to His Worship, the Mayor,

“Ottawa.

“DEAR SIR,—I beg to acknowledge yours of the 21st instant, forwarding a letter from the Chief of the Fire Department in complaint of the action of the Dominion Police Sergeant who was on duty at the West Block at the time of

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a false alarm from that building on the morning of January 11, and in regard to it I beg to forward copies of reports received from the Inspector-in-Charge of the Fire Service, and the Sergeant-in-Charge, to whom the Chief particularly refers. It does not seem necessary to assure you that there is no desire whatever on the part of the Police to interfere in any way with the functions of the Fire Department, but on this occasion it was at once manifest from the time the indicator that the alarm was a false one, and the mistake made by the Sergeant was not in allowing the Officer-in-Charge of the first section that arrived, and anyone he desired to take with him to make the examination, I do not think that any reasonable person would contend for one moment that it was necessary for the whole brigade to be admitted to the building. In the event of anything of the kind occurring in the future, those first arriving at the building will be allowed to make an inspection, and in the event of actual fire, of course, they will have full scope as has always been the case.

"I think that perhaps His Worship will agree that there was scarcely the necessity for the publicity that has been given this trifling matter, as a note or a telephone call from the Chief would have served the purpose aimed at.

"Yours faithfully,

"CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF POLICE."

(Letter filed as Exhibit No. 20.)

It was in substance that I did not approve of the action of the Sergeant in not allowing the first captain or first officer of the fire brigade to go in with such men as he required to substantiate the fact whether there was a fire or not. The indicator showed the fire was right where the policeman was, and it was undoubtedly caused by the opening of a door, making a sudden rise in the temperature, but manifestly a false alarm, and looked into before the firemen arrived. I said in my letter that we had no objection to the firemen going in and exercising their functions whenever necessary, but it did not occur to me that it was necessary for the whole brigade on this occasion to go in and examine the building which was closed, but I put it very plainly that there was no feeling in it, and with a telephone message or a note from the Chief, there would have been no cause for complaint, and the matter would have been remedied right off, and in view of the circumstances, I issued the instructions which I referred to.

Fires just now are quickly attributable to enemy causes. Just after this fire there was an account of nine or ten thousand feet of a dock in Brooklyn which was burnt by German agency, and two British ships loaded with ammunition were destroyed, but the report of Fire Commissioners Thompson and Brophy of the company interested in the dock, reported later on that there was no malice in the matter at all, but it was found to be poor installation in the wiring—not that there was any explosives on the ship, or that any explosion took place there. I did not see anything in our papers regarding this, and that is why I mention it.

I must say, in regard to my own Police Department, that I think they will, individually and as an organization, compare favourably with any I know of—the men are faithful and diligent in the performance of their duties, and they deal with a very difficult position, I think, with considerable tact.

Mr. PRINGLE: I quite agree with you, that at the present time, no doubt, when a fire occurred such as this, it is naturally attributable to the enemy—I do not know that we have evidence at the present time that this was set by the enemy, but it is with no great surprise that the people should look to the enemy.—A. Oh no, quite so.

Commissioner PRINGLE: In view of what has occurred in the United States, and what has been done by the enemy. Now, there does not seem to be so much doubt about this, although not evidence, the editor of the *Providence Journal* seems to have had warning in January that this building was going to be destroyed—that warning

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was communicated to Mr. Marshall of New York who is connected with the Attorney-General's Department of that State. For some reason best known to Mr. Marshall, that does not appear to have been communicated to the authorities here—at least, I will ask you now, if you received such communication in any shape, that there would be an attempt to destroy the building?—A. I would not go that far. I have put in evidence there, that there was an alarming report way back in July, when we took these extra precautions—I say there was certain confidential information received.

Commissioner PRINGLE: It may be that no German mind inspired this, but at the same time, there is a very strong feeling that it is quite within the possibilities that it was inspired, but as far as you or your Department is concerned, you never received any information?—A. No, not such as you speak of—of any time in January.

Q. I do not think that there is any necessity to comment on the integrity of the Dominion Police, but from the statement you have given, I have not the slightest doubt but that every precaution was taken by your Force to protect the property from destruction. There was yesterday a Mr. Wagner—whom I do not know personally, but it was quite within his rights to come here—he objected to the alien enemy to have free access to the East Block; he explained that your office being there, and alien enemies coming to report from time to time, that is those on parole, that they came to make their reports, and he rather threw out the suggestion that they might report in some other quarter, such as the Police Force quarters, or in some building not as important as the East Block?—A. They do not report there—they go there to apply for exit, in order that they may leave the city. Now I am the only one that can grant the exit in Ottawa, and they come around in the fire-proof building where I am, and they are brought into the corridor by a policeman who is stationed there, and gives them in charge of the office that looks after this particular situation.

Mr. PRINGLE: I am very glad to get that explanation, because the impression on my mind has been, and I dare say on the minds of those who heard Mr. Wagner, was that the alien enemy were permitted to roam around that building at their own free will?—A. No, sir, they were not. I remember Mr. Wagner coming into me on one occasion and saying he had seen some people that he looked upon with great suspicion, and described them, and said where they were, and I took means to find out, and found that they were some of my own special men working at the fire protection.

Q. Then as I understand, these aliens are not permitted to roam about in anyway?—A. No, sir, they are not.

Q. They all have to go to you, but they are brought in charge of a policeman?—A. Yes, and in this office they deal with the officer who has to go into their cases, and judge whether it is proper to give them an exit to leave the country, and as the number of exits will show there are very few dealt with.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. And I suppose the ordinary interned deals with the city police?—A. Yes, sir, the city police deals with the whole situation as far as alien nationalities are concerned.

Q. Just as a matter of curiosity—you no doubt made an investigation to try and clear up this matter—and I suppose you approached it with the common idea that it might be the work of an alien enemy—A. Quite so—of course I did so, but when there is not a feature there which is not reconcilable to accident, I rather give the benefit of the doubt to the suspected.

Q. That is quite natural?—A. That is my education at any rate.

Commissioner PRINGLE: I do not remember what other complaints Mr. Wagner had. I think it was in regard to lack of fire escapes, and the question of aliens, but those have been explained. There was another and that is in regard to a large room of papers in the attic of the East block?—A. That is an objectionable feature, but it is not for me to say how it should be overcome. I have time and again asked, and we have cleaned up this situation considerably. I daresay if Mr. Wagner goes back

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some years he will say it has greatly improved, but I do not say yet it is ideal, but that is not a matter that I can control.

Q. I suppose these papers must be kept for some reason or other?—A. As a matter of record.

Q. There should be some other place for them?—A. It ought to be fireproof.

Q. Or contained in iron-steel cases?—A. Yes, that would help a good deal to have them in a steel case room.

Q. Books and papers put in pigeon-holes are not highly inflammable?—A. No, they are not.

Q. There is something about some dynamite being found—tell us about that?—

A. It is simply that last fall some dynamite was ordered by an official of the Public Works Department to be delivered at the East block to blow up some old debris, and by some mistake the man who was to do this was not there, and the dynamite was received by an officer of the Public Works Department, sent out by a Government express wagon to the scene of operation. The man waited there until the usual time for the work to start and nobody turned up to use it, and he stupidly brought it back and handed it over to a foreman, and this foreman, as I understand it, left it on his table. It was found by the watchman at six o'clock, and taken over by the police, and taken outside the building. I may say it is not usual for the constable to go into parcels that are to be delivered direct to Public Works officials, and it is not his instructions.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

GEORGE DOUGLAS KENNEDY, of Dominion Police, duly sworn, deposed:—

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You heard what Colonel Sherwood said—have you anything to say in regard to the points he touched on?—A. I could explain, if desirable, the work of the men on the ground.

Q. Just explain that, but you might say if you agree with the statements of the Colonel that come within your knowledge?—A. Yes. Regarding inside protection of the House of Commons, that matter was gone into by the commissioner, and also by Colonel Smith, the sergeant-at-arms. Now the first duty of the men—they are paraded and marched off every evening at 6 o'clock. Along with these men at the door there are twelve to fifteen patrolling the ground at night, equally divided around the out-building. There are three beats around the East Block that almost join another—we do not have them join exactly, so that the constables cannot enter into conversation with one another. There is one that covers 133 feet on the east side, and this is the side that Dr. Sproule says he passed along and did not see a constable. Now day and night there is always a constable there, and has been since the war commenced. Another one runs at the rear of the East Block to the Governor General's entrance, and another one from the southwest corner to the southeast corner. Of course, those beats are kept up steadily with men relieving each other. Inside the East Block we have four constables employed there, one at the door, and others at different points. One of those constables patrols the building throughout the night with a patrol clock. This clock has keys stationed at different places in the building, so as to make the constable cover the whole of the building in his examination. The dial of the clock is examined every morning and if any irregularity it is reported to the Commissioner of Dominion Police. Besides this, there is a watchman from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. who patrols the building with a patrol clock, and besides there is an engineer who patrols the building, looking after the heating apparatus—so I consider the building is very well patrolled. This place in the attic that Mr. Wagner says is so dangerous, all these men go through that part.

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Q. In the daytime?—A. No, not in the daytime. Dr. Sproule says he saw a window open—that might be. If a clerk in the office wishes to have air, he can open the window, and if the clerk goes away and neglects to put it down, the constable on the outside notifies the one inside and he closes the window. The watchman has control of all the windows, and closes the windows and looks for fires. At 6 o'clock the police try every door and window they can reach, and if any unlocked and not attended to, they make an entry in a memo. book, and it goes to the proper authority. I have records here where a constable reported a window broken or a window left open, and it has come to the proper authorities. In the House of Commons there is one in the library, at the Serjeant-at-Arms' corner, and one along the front. In the West Block there are two, and a watchman as well as the engineer—that is patrolled the same as the East Block at different times.

Q. There is a sergeant in control of these different men?—A. All of these men. There is a sergeant amongst them continually all night. He goes around amongst these men, seeing that the men are on their beat, and he has to make an entry every time he visits those men, and the men make an entry each time he visits them. The visits of the sergeant average from 85 to 100 in a night, so that goes to show they are on the move.

Q. You have not spoken yet of the interior of the House of Commons?—A. I said at the start that both the Commissioner and the Serjeant-at-Arms made it pretty clear that the police were not responsible for the protection of the inside.

Q. But the policemen were furnished from your force?—A. Yes, like loaned to them for the time being.

Q. At the request of the Serjeant-at-Arms in the Commons and of the Chief Messenger in the Senate?—A. Yes. The police were not responsible for the inside of the Commons or the Senate, and as some mention was made of the air ducts in the Lovers' Walk—we have a man there too, and these ducts have been rebricked, and there is no danger there at all, particularly as they are being patrolled every little while.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Col. E. M. MACDONALD, M.P., called and sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Mr. Macdonald, I believe you were present in the Chamber when the fire broke out?—A. I was in the gallery of the House of Commons.

Q. Tell us what you remember of the occurrence, and fix the hour as nearly as possible.—A. I arrived at the House that evening at about 25 minutes to 9, and was in the Chamber for about 10 minutes, when called out by a messenger with a card from some one who wanted to get a seat in the gallery. I came out and took them to the gallery and stayed there until the fire was announced. I remember distinctly of looking at the clock a moment before the fire was announced, and was preparing to go downstairs, and found that the clock was 1 minute of 9. On turning to go down I met Mrs. Warnock, the wife of the member who was preparing to go to the front, and Mrs. Wright of my own province, and I stopped to speak to them for a moment or two—I was talking to them when I saw Mr. Martin of Montreal rush into the Chamber from the door at the northeast corner and shouting out that the House was on fire. I noticed the Speaker immediately leave the Chair, and I said to the ladies with whom I was talking "You must run immediately and lose no time." They started and ran and as going along I noticed a puff of smoke come up apparently from the door which faced the Speaker's Chair—which faced the east corridor—I heard two distinct noises—I do not know whether you would call them explosions, but the word "explosions" would define the noises I heard as well as anything. I ran and lost no time to go out. We were the last to leave the Gallery. There were some

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people in the Senate Gallery who had got out before I got out. I reached the main floor in less than a minute after the alarm, because I was not impeded and went back—when I got down there were tremendous volumes of black smoke—it struck me at the time as being of an unusual colour, but however, the situation was menacing and I said “It is impossible for me to get my clothes,” and I abandoned the idea and going into the corridor and went down to the main floor where the members had gathered.

Q. You were referring to the Eastern corridor where your clothes were?—A. Yes, I went to where the Members were, and everything got so full of smoke that it was evident very soon that the whole thing was gone. There was a circumstance which I mentioned to some member that night, which perhaps I had better mention. As I said, I arrived at the building at 25 minutes to 9—that was the time by the clock as I was coming up from the Rideau Club—it was approaching 25 minutes to 9, and as I was going through the main door, and coming to enter the lobby, and going up the steps, I was struck by a man who was standing on the ledge, on the left door going into the lobby—quite unconsciously, I was struck by his appearance and restless manner—I was not thinking of anything in particular, and nothing to attract my attention at all, except by some influence this man struck my attention. He was nervous and his eyes were shifty. When I saw him looking at me, he looked at me very intently, and I said to myself, “That is a very curious man,” and seemed to be worried about something and I passed on.

Q. That would be as entering the door?—A. Yes, about 25 minutes to 9.

Q. How did you enter the Chamber?—A. Through the main lobby and to the post office to see if there was any mail, and I went into the East lobby where I keep my coat and hat, and passed to the Chamber facing the Speaker. When going upstairs, in response to the note, this same man was standing looking very intently down the East corridor, and I was again impressed with the peculiar something—I could not tell you what, to put it in cold English,—it was one of those things you cannot explain in detail, but the appearance of this man was such, that for the moment, the thought was in my brain to speak to one of the officers to look after this man, but I went on up and said I would leave it until I came down.

Q. Mr. Northrup saw a man coming down the East corridor just a few minutes before 9 o'clock—he thought he had a check suit on.—A. This man had an overcoat on, and a heavy grey moustache,—a rather striking moustache anyway,—a very heavy one. Those were the two things that struck me most particularly about him. I could not say more, because you take a man with a very heavy blanket coat on, it covers up his identity pretty well.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. The position the man was in was outside the corridor?—A. The first time he was standing on the ledge looking down at the people coming in at the main door—then the second time he was standing looking down intently down the corridor.

Q. He would be at the post office lobby?—A. Yes.

Q. And at the door would be the ordinary number of officers?—A. Yes. Of course, you are aware there was no reason why any one could not get all around those buildings, by going along past the telegraph office and the press gallery and around that way.

Q. But still he would meet a policeman in one corridor or the other?—A. He would, when he got around to the Speaker's chamber.

Q. And if he went around by the west wing he would meet a policeman there, and if he had no right there he would be turned away?—A. Still, without any reflection upon the police, the number of people who were in the habit of coming and going for years around those corridors on political business, unless a man actually looked disreputable, and a person who could not possibly have any right to be there, the policemen would not stop him.

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Q. Don't you think as a matter of fact—for I have been there a good deal—as a matter of fact, the policemen on the door and the doorkeeper get to know the people who are in the habit of going there?—A. I know they would know you.

Q. I have seen men who look more respectable than myself who have been stopped.—A. Of course, I meant people going to see members of Parliament and others around there. I do not know that there is anything more I can say except this, that while I have no experience with fires, and I do not want any, if that fire there in that building as I saw it arose from purely natural causes without any attributable outside forces, then, to my mind, there is no public building in this country but what the public are liable to see destroyed at any time. I found the situation to be this, and I have not seen any member who passed through that experience but what believed that that fire was not due to purely natural causes. Members who did not see the fire, and those who have their theories as to it having been started by cigarettes and that sort of thing, may have their own idea but the people who went through the experience think as I do.

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. It went with tremendous rapidity?—A. Perfectly marvellous rapidity.

Q. The evidence of the Mayor of Montreal was that he came out of that corner and saw nothing, and went to get his coat, and he had no sooner swung it on his arm, then the reading room was a perfect mass of flames?—A. I can recall seeing him leave his seat underneath the press gallery, and noticed him making his way towards the northeast door, and almost immediately afterwards he returned with the announcement of fire.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. We have the evidence of five first-hand witnesses who were present at the inception of the fire, and when it was in a very small compass, and it is said the fire was burning on a pile of papers on the lower shelf a foot from the floor—between that and the upper shelf would be about six inches that there was no great volume of flame or smoke, until the constable brought the extinguisher and turned it on, and in trying to reach under, he blew the paper apart, and it immediately burst into flame and blew against the partition where the files were hanging loosely, and immediately it caught on the paper, and then on the varnished dry pine, and it ran up with amazing rapidity and spread all over the Chamber, and drove them out of the Chamber and then they went and turned the hose on the other side—it has been described by all the witnesses that the wood was of a highly inflammable character, and the galleries of the same wood, and with papers on the wall—would that, in your mind account in any way for the rapidity of the fire, and also taking into consideration the lockers in the corridors which were of the same character—would that have any effect in making the fire as rapid as you say?—A. I could not express an opinion that would be of any value in that case—not an expert opinion, but I believe from what I saw at the time, and immediately after, that there must have been some exciting cause to the flame in the eastern corridor. I do not think the condition of the eastern corridor within sixty seconds of the alarm by Mayor Martin was such that it could be due to smoke or flame that came from the reading room in that time.

Q. There is this to be considered too, and I would like to suggest to you—as a matter of fact Mayor Martin saw nobody at the door of the reading room, he saw no fire or smelt no smoke. It seems evident, that the policeman who had been on the door had gone in on the call of Mr. Glass who first noticed the fire—I think that is a fair inference to draw at the time the Mayor went out of the Chamber that the policeman and Mr. Glass inside were endeavouring to extinguish the fire, and the swinging door was closed, and the fire burst out with the suddenness that the Mayor described, after it had attained a considerable volume?—A. In the meantime Mr. Glass had gone to alarm the members.

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Q. But Mr. Glass was there at the beginning and called in the man—did you see Mr. Glass?—A. No, I could not see him from where I was sitting.

Q. Did you hear him?—A. No, but from what I understand, Mr. Glass had entered the main entrance facing the Speaker, and had given the alarm there, while Mr. Martin was giving it at the northeast corner.

Q. At any rate Mr. Glass had been there, and there were others there, the page and constable and door-keeper?—A. Well, I do not think I could assist you in that, because we would be only expressing an opinion.

Q. I am merely suggesting this as a basis on which you could form an opinion?—A. My opinion of what may or may not have occurred in the reading-room would be of very little value. I do not know whether Sir Thomas White has given evidence—

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Of course, as far as the evidence goes, and I think I am quite right, there is no evidence of anybody in there smoking for at least 15 or 20 minutes before the fire broke out, and it is only fair to say that Mr. Glass in giving his evidence and when two fires were started before him, one created by a match and another by a chemical, he said the fire at its inception resembled the fire created by the chemical, and your opinion is that there must have been something which accelerated that fire in those corridors?—A. My opinion is, and of course, my knowledge as to the event which led me to form that opinion is based on knowledge of what I saw in the corridor, and that is that there must have been some accelerating causes or cause in the corridors to create the condition that I saw there in this incredible short space of time. That is my opinion and judgment. As to what took place in the reading room I am not in a position to say anything.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

DAVID EWART, recalled, deposed:

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. Mr. Wagner appeared before this Commission yesterday, and among his complaints, if I may call them that, he stated there were no precautions taken in the Eastern Block for the safety of those who were engaged on the upper floor. Have any precautions been taken?—A. They are being taken. We started out to-day putting on 80 Davis fire-escapes. It is a belt that goes under your arms, and an arrangement of pulleys.

Q. Those are being placed there?—A. Yes, there are 80 in the Museum, and they are starting to do it on the Langevin Block.

Q. I do not know if we have anything to do with this, or whether you are guardian of the safety of employees in the Civil Service—there are a large number of buildings in this city—take these Wood buildings on Slater street, in which a tremendous number of people are employed, I understand from three to four hundred young girls alone—does that come in any way under your department to see to the safety of these people?—A. I would think, as we are renting the buildings, we ought to insist in them being made safe.

Q. It strikes me, every protection should be taken to protect the employees in those large buildings. Are any steps being taken?—A. Not as far as I know at present.

Q. Is it not time it should be considered? Here are thousands of employees in these buildings all over Ottawa, and if fire started in the Woods building, there would be a tremendous loss. I do not know whose duty it is, but it is just as well the matter should be brought up.

Mr. WHITE: This matter Inspector Giroux can speak of—he says there are fire-escapes in the buildings—they all have to obey the city by-laws.

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Inspector GIROUX: In all these buildings, even the Woods building, there are large fire-escapes on which fifty could come down at a time.

Mr. PRINGLE: Then I am glad to hear it.

Mr. EWART: Of course, these buildings are fireproof and nothing in them to burn but the furniture—so that is quite a different thing.

Q. The East Block is not fireproof?—A. No.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. But in any fireproof building there might be sufficient inflammable material to make it burn?—A. Yes, in the general offices.

Commissioner PRINGLE: I just wanted to know if steps were being taken to protect the employees.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. It was stated by some witnesses that with reference to explosions, and where the wall was thrown out in some way—have you examined that place since the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. Tell us now, if you can clearly, what you found there after examining the place?—A. I have seen no indication whatever of an explosion.

Q. Did you see anything to justify the statement that there was one—what would make the noise that some parties heard?—A. The falling of the ventilation tower and the falling of the ceilings. There was one stone a long way from the building, and I was asked how it could get there, and I examined it, and found it was the top stone of the chimney.

Q. So it would likely fall some considerable distance from the building?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

SAMUEL SPENCER, assistant of the reading-room, duly sworn, deposed:—

By Mr. Pringle, K.C.:

Q. You were present on the occasion when Mr. Weichel, M.P., was in the reading-room and a fire broke out in a pile of papers?—A. Yes, sir, at least I think it was Mr. Weichel, and a military man.

Q. And you assisted in putting that out?—A. Yes.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

The investigation thereupon adjourned to be resumed at the call of the Commissioners.

OTTAWA, May 5, 1916.

The investigation resumed proceedings at 10.30 a.m.

PRESENT:

R. A. PRINGLE, Esq., K.C.;	} Commissioners.
His Honour Judge DUNCAN BYRON MAC TAVISH,	
W. R. WHITE, K.C., <i>Counsel to the Commission.</i>	

JOHN A. PEARSON, sworn, deposed:

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. You are an architect?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. Of how many years' experience?—A. About thirty.

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Q. Residing in Toronto?—A. Yes.

Q. You are one of the architects selected by the Government to restore the Parliament Buildings?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. And you have been acting superintendent of the work of clearing away and examining the ruins since the fire?—A. Not the clearing away—just examining the ruins and the building.

Q. And you made a careful examination of that shortly after the fire?—A. Yes.

Q. And before any attempt was made to clear away the stuff?—A. There was practically just a day clearing away, nothing removed.

Q. Have you been able to form an opinion as to whether there was any evidence of explosion in the burned portion of the building?—A. I never saw any evidence of it in my examination.

Q. And from what came under your personal observation would it lead you to the belief that there had not been any?—A. I really believe that.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. I do not think Mr. Pearson was familiar with the reading-room or newspaper room where the fire was supposed to have started?—A. No.

Q. Would you be in a position to express an opinion as to the effect that air being pumped into the building would have in spreading that fire?—A. I think it would add to the rapid spread of the fire throughout the building. There were two 90-inch flues and one 30-inch and they would develop 100,000 cubic feet of air a minute.

Q. If they were in operation at the time the fire started what effect would that have in the spread of the fire?—A. Well, it is just supplying that amount of oxygen, and then there was an exhaust fan which would exhaust 70 per cent of that and these were all in operation the Engineer tells me when the fire started.

Q. That you think would accelerate the fire?—A. Certainly.

By Mr. Whitelock:

Q. Perhaps it would be fairer to put this question: the evidence all goes to show that this room in which the fire started was lined with partitions of white pine with several coats of varnish and with loose files of papers hanging on the walls and as detailed by one of the witnesses the fire spread to the walls and caught on to the papers and immediately went off, as described, like a flash of powder—could you form an opinion as to how the fire would spread under those circumstances and on varnished pine of that kind?—A. No, sir.

Q. It would in your opinion be highly inflammable?—A. Yes.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. Thomas Wensley said all the fans were in operation—he says: “I have to see that the place is properly heated and ventilated, for which there are a number of fans—two fans about twenty feet above the skylight in the House of Commons and two fans down in the boiler house, one an exhaust and the other a blower, and also another exhaust immediately under the centre of the reading-room—these were all in operation.” What effect would this have under those circumstances?—A. Practically the effect of a blacksmith’s bellows in a smithy fire pumping in the oxygen. I understand also outside the reading-room were the wooden lockers and then overhead some bedrooms, and in the construction there was so much woodwork that the fire just travelled that way, to my mind. There is evidence there of a great deal of woodwork in the construction, the ceilings having been heavily timbered and all around the doors and jambs were wooden frames and the windows lumber of one foot six—four times more wood than you would use now.

Q. The whole structure was such that it would tend to burn very rapidly?—A. Yes.

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Q. Is there anything further you can tell us from your examination of the building?—A. No, sir, there is nothing more I know of.

I suppose your idea is that the fire having once started in that newspaper room, with all that inflammable material there and with those fans going and this pressure of air, is that it would spread with great rapidity?—A. Yes.

Q. And it would be almost impossible to prevent its spread?—A. Yes. And when I read in the proceedings of the inquiry and learned of suggestions of it having been set on fire I bore that in mind and looked carefully into everything to see if there would be anything to show that. Of course, there was nothing to my mind that I could see—it is all explainable with the nature of the construction and the amount of woodwork and the air and passageways.

Q. Have you ever had any experience with the explosion of electric lights—taking a 16-candle light and putting pressure on it, it makes a great explosion—would heat have the same effect?—A. That I cannot answer, sir.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Dr. A. W. CHISHOLM, sworn, deposed:

Commissioner PRINGLE: The doctor wants to correct a statement which appeared in the evidence in regard to him having asked somebody to go back—whose evidence is that?

The WITNESS: I think Mr. Bailey, one of the messengers.

Q. What is your constituency?—A. Inverness.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Mr. Bailey says “I was down there when the alarm came for fire and Dr. Chisholm rushed down into the messengers’ room and asked me if I would take a chance to go up after his coat, and I said: ‘No, Doctor, the smoke would put me back.’ I just turned round and as I did Mr. Law was there and said: ‘If I had what was in my coat I would not care for my coat.’—so I did not see him after that.”—A. What I desire to correct is this: when I came down to the corridor at the main entrance I noticed that the Minister of Agriculture was coming down with his face burned—I took charge of him and brought him into the messengers’ room and was attending to him—he had a desire to rub his face and I knew it would be injurious to the skin and I wanted to stay by him until more assistance came and I remained with him. About then Mr. Bailey came along and I asked him to get my coat and hat which were in my room upstairs. I was after getting over the grippe and I felt it cold there at the time—but what I want particularly to emphasize is that I did not say to Mr. Bailey to take a chance because really I did not realize there was any danger at that time. I never had experience in fires, but at this time it was early in the stage and I had the idea the fire forces had control of the fire and I was remaining with the minister and did not wish to leave him until I got another professional man or got the minister home and I would not want the impression to go on record that I would ask any man to do what I would not do myself.

Q. Where were you when the fire started?—A. In the Chamber.

Q. What was the first intimation you had that the building was on fire?—A. The announcement was made by Mr. Stewart, the head of the messengers.

Q. Is that the man called the doorkeeper?—A. Yes.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. Then when you came out in what condition was the fire?—A. When I came out there was no evidence of fire where I came—I came through the entrance at the back of the Speaker.

Q. On the west side?—A. Yes, and through the corridor to the main entrance.

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Q. Where did you come in contact with the Minister of Agriculture?—A. That was some time after I was down. I may say I saw a lady down at the main entrance and I recognized her as one of the ladies who was in the gallery when I left the Chamber, and I went to her to find out if the other ladies had got out of the gallery, and as returning I saw the minister coming out evidently from the corridor, and seeing the condition of his face I went to him—it would be two or three minutes I suppose.

Q. So the fire must have got into the corridor very quickly after you got out?—A. Yes, surprisingly so.

Q. Is there anything else?—A. Yes, just one thing more. Mr. Bailey made reference to the fact that Mr. Law asked him to get his coat—I have no recollection of that, and the reason I want that on record is that I would not want Mr. Law's friends to think that I did not say I had no recollection when I did not have any.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. He does not say that exactly, the words he used were: "I just turned around and as I did Mr. Law was there and said, 'If I had what was in my coat I would not care for my coat.'"—A. I have no recollection of that being said.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. You were present when Mr. Law was there?—A. I was present when Mr. Bailey says Mr. Law was there.

Q. And was Mr. Law there?—A. I do not know—that is just the point. I have a vague recollection of some one standing behind me and saying something about his coat but I do not know who it was—my attention was on my patient at the time.

Q. Now is there anything else?—A. No, nothing else, and I am much obliged to the commission for the privilege of making this statement.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

ALBERT SEVIGNY, Speaker of the House of Commons, sworn, deposed:

MR. WHITE: You might just make a statement of what you might desire to say.

MR. SEVIGNY: I really do not know very much. When the fire broke out I was in my office in the Speaker's apartments downstairs and I heard a noise in the corridor and went to the main door of my apartments and was there told that there was a fire in the reading room and I realized it was very serious because my children were about ten feet from the reading-room, practically above it. They were asleep in bed. It was about nine o'clock. So I went upstairs right away and gave the alarm in my apartments. My wife was with Mrs. Morin, Mrs. Bray and Mrs. Dussault in the small parlour which we had in the second floor, at the west end of the Speaker's apartments, and my children were at the other end—so I gave the alarm and I saw my wife going out of that small parlour and when I saw her going out I knew that she had understood me and that her friends were coming with her, and I went for my children at the other end. I took my children downstairs to the kitchen of the Speaker's apartments and immediately I went upstairs again—I ran through the dining-room, through the main parlour, and when I reached the main entrance of the Speaker's apartments everything was burning.

Q. Of the apartments?—A. Yes, the door and main entrance—the glass was broken and all the door on fire so I could not go upstairs because it was impossible to go upstairs to the second floor of the apartment and I went downstairs and took a fire hose and when I opened the door there the smoke was so dense that I was practically suffocated myself and there I saw the two poor Desjardins they were working where I was myself, and I got up and ran back to the kitchen and I went downstairs to the dining-room again and there opened the window and heard some cries in the window above me—Mrs. Dussault was there calling for help and she wanted to jump

and I told her not to jump but to wait for the firemen who were coming, and the firemen came with a net and she jumped into that net. I thought that Mrs. Morin and Mrs. Bray were with her in that window and I asked for Mrs. Morin and Mrs. Bray at this time to jump but I got no answer, and then I realized that our poor friends were dead and I practically collapsed myself—I was taken out by two of my men there, Mr. Harman and another one. I went outside and recovered and I sent my wife and children to the Chateau and I remained there until about a quarter to ten or ten o'clock and that is the story in short of what I know, and perhaps I can tell this to the Commission: two or three days before the fire, one day I was in my office when a stranger came in—he told me he was acting for La Maison Lafitte, Paris—and wanted to take some pictures of the Parliament Buildings and wanted my permission to do so. I said that if in ordinary times I would give him permission with pleasure, but in these serious times it was impossible to give that permission. He represented himself as a French soldier just back from the war and said he was very anxious to take pictures of the buildings. I refused and he came back next day and wanted to see me and I told him I could not receive him.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. What was his nationality?—A. He said he was French.

Q. Could you tell what he was?—A. Well, when I saw that man coming into my office, here is the reflection I made to myself, that man looks very much like a German—that is the reflection I made myself when I saw him coming in.

Q. I suppose he spoke splendid French?—A. He spoke good French; he spoke good French but not as a Frenchman from the other side—there is a difference in the accent; the accent is not the same.

Q. There are a good many different accents outside the Parisian accent.

By Commission Pringle:

Q. How long would that be before the fire?—A. The fire was on the 3rd of February, and the 3rd was a Thursday—well, the first time he came was on Monday of that week, and he came back the next day, on Tuesday, and he came back, I think, on Thursday morning, but I am not sure—he wanted to see me and I said to my messenger I was too busy to receive him that morning, so a few minutes after he telephoned to me and he said he was very very anxious about taking some pictures, and I said it was impossible to give him that permission.

Q. Do you know how far he had access to the building—did he get right to your chamber?—A. Yes.

Q. Right through the corridor?—A. Yes—he came to the door of the Speaker's apartments.

Q. That is what I want to know—he evidently had no difficulty in passing the guards, if guards, and reaching the door of your apartment? You say he would be in the corridor?—A. Yes.

Q. We have some evidence of a party being about those corridors on the night of the fire—I think Mr. E. M. Macdonald said that—how was he dressed?—A. He was wearing an ordinary suit—I think a brown suit, and he had a small mustache with fair hair and a big round head—a man about five feet seven.

Q. And your impression is, and the best of your opinion is, that he was not a Frenchman but a German?—A. Well, by his appearance, yes.

Q. Now in regard to the two ladies who lost their lives, you had every reason to believe they had heard your warning and were following you out with Madame Sévigny?—A. I am sure they did—they were with my wife and my wife heard me when I gave the alarm and she told her friends to come downstairs, to come with her.

Q. You heard her call to her friends?—A. No—you see the Speaker's apartments on the second floor are 150 feet long and when I gave the alarm my wife was in the small parlour ninety feet from me and she was with her friends—I did not see them.

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Q. And you called to her?—A. Yes, I said: "There is a fire in the reading-room, come downstairs."

Q. And your wife heard you?—A. Yes.

Q. And if she heard they must also have heard?—A. Yes, absolutely.

Q. And then they could have made their escape?—A. Yes, easily.

Q. Do you know if they went back to get any personal possessions?—A. That is what I was told by my wife—my wife asked them to follow here and they said: "Yes we will but we will go to our room first, we have time."—you know my wife did not take time to look after her furs or jewels, her children were there and as every mother would do she looked after her children—the children were about 125 feet from her and she ran to them.

Q. Have you any idea where the telephone message by this stranger to you was from?—A. No, no idea at all. That man was very anxious to take some pictures and wanted to take my own. He said if you do not want to give me permission to take pictures of the building I want to take your own picture, and I said I am very busy and as it would take an hour or three-quarters of an hour to take a picture I said I had not time but why do you not go to Topley's—I have a picture taken two weeks ago there and I will give you word to get a picture from them, and he said: no, I want to take it myself—he was very anxious about that.

Q. Did you notice if the man had a mustache?—A. Yes, a small one, fair.

Q. He was not grey?—A. No, he was a young man, about 32 or 33.

Q. That could not be the man Mr. Macdonald said because he said he had a grey overcoat and Mr. Northrup said he saw a man with a check suit.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. You never saw this man after?—A. Never. The day after the fire I gave orders to the messenger who was at the door when that man came in to try and find him in Ottawa.

Q. Did he make an effort?—A. Yes.

Q. But could not find him?—A. No.

Q. What was the name of the messenger at the door?—A. Mr. Turcotte; he is not here now, I do not think he will be back this year; he left on Saturday on account of illness.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Here is the evidence of Mr. Northrup: "When I reached the doors that led from the post office corridor to the main corridors, I noticed a little altercation between the door-keeper of the corridor that leads to the reading room and some tall young man who wanted to go on, a man dressed in a plaid or check suit. He evidently wanted to go down that corridor and I looked to see how it would work out, but only a few seconds, and my impression is he went down the corridor towards the reading room."

Q. Do you know who he was?—A. I never saw him before—I only saw his back and have no idea who he was. His overcoat was a grey check and of a rather striking colour.

Q. Had he the appearance of a respectable man?—A. Oh yes."

Q. Now it is said by one of the witnesses that the nursery attached to the apartments is over towards the reading room?—A. Yes.

Q. And that is reached by a passage along from there to the second floor?—A. Yes.

Q. And that corridor was described to us as comparatively newly constructed and made of ordinary lath and plaster?—A. I do not know about that.

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Q. But if a fire broke into the nursery it would go with great rapidity along that?
—A. No doubt.

Q. That would be another flue which would attract the fire through your chambers?—A. Yes.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. Did this man want to take photographs of the interior of the building?—A. Yes.

Q. He evidently wanted access to the interior?—A. Yes to the Chamber and Library and Senate.

Mr. WHITE: It is quite evident he would not need permission to take photographs outside.

Commissioner PRINGLE: But it is just as well to have it——

The WITNESS: I would suggest that the Commission wire to La Maison Lafitte, Paris, and inquire if they had a man taking pictures for them in this country in January last and the name of the man.

His Honour Judge MACTAVISH: Did he give you his name?

The WITNESS: Yes, he did, but I do not remember it. He told me that he was a soldier just back from the war, and was back on account of his rheumatism.

Q. Did he have a camera with him?—A. Yes.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. You do not know whether it was a camera or something containing a camera?—A. He had a suitcase in which were all the appliances for taking photographs.

Q. It is told by the police that they did not allow them with kodaks inside the building at all; so this man must have got in by stealth somewhere?—A. Well, everything was in a suitcase.

Q. He was not carrying the kodak openly?—A. No.

By Mr. White, K.C.:

Q. Would you know the name of the man if you heard it?—A. Yes, I would, and I repeated that story myself to some people in Ottawa after the fire and I gave the name then—I do not remember now—I think the name was published in some of the Ottawa papers at that time, but I do not remember. I think there was something in the *Ottawa Journal* or the *Free Press* about that.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

Col. HENRY R. SMITH, Serjeant-at-Arms.

By Commissioner Pringle:

Q. I believe you desire to say something, Colonel?—A. Just a word or two. I have noticed in the course of the investigation that Col. Percy Sherwood and the Dominion Police have been to some extent criticised as to the manner in which their duties were discharged at the House of Commons, and the only remark I wish to make in reference thereto is that I had a very close experience of their doings and have had for a number of years past, and I always found him most diligent and painstaking and careful in every way. If we differed at all as between Colonel Sherwood and myself, it was that they were a little too particular in the discharge of their duties

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and exercised a little too much precaution in excluding people. The other point is in regard to the evidence of Mr. Deacon, who I think swore that he had for a number of years no instructions in regard to smoking within the reading room. Well, I wish to say that every session proper notices were given him to hang up in the room, which constituted an order, and these strictly forbade smoking in the reading room.

Q. Anything else?—A. That is all—I just wanted to make that clear as far as I was individually concerned.

And furthermore witness deposeth not.

(The investigation thereupon adjourned to be resumed at the call of the Commissioners.)

